



Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is written in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026), Working Together to Safeguard Children, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct, Cyber-bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, together with relevant statutory and departmental guidance.

The school places clear emphasis on its duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare and to prevent and respond to the harmful impact of child-on-child abuse. LVBS takes abuse seriously and adopts a zero-tolerance approach: abuse is never acceptable and will not be passed off as "banter", "girls drama" or "boys being boys". Every student has the right to learn and undertake vocational training free from abuse, harassment, discrimination and bullying, whether the behaviour occurs in school, in the dance studio, in the community or online. Unkind or inappropriate behaviour will always be challenged and addressed, even where it does not meet the definition of bullying. A single incident may constitute abuse or require a safeguarding response .

Bullying at LVBS is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally and commonly involves an imbalance of power. It may be physical, verbal, emotional or psychological; direct or indirect; prejudice-based or discriminatory; and may take place face-to-face or online. Cyberbullying can occur at any time and can be shared rapidly with a wide audience. Conduct does not need to meet the definition of bullying before the school will intervene. Child-on-child abuse can include discriminatory behaviour; abuse in intimate personal relationships; physical abuse or threatened serious violence; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, including images altered or generated using AI; upskirting; initiation or hazing-type violence; and abuse facilitated by technology.

At LVBS, staff take action to prevent and respond to abuse, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The school acts in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and, where applicable, the Public Sector Equality Duty. It will have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The school also has regard to the Human Rights Act 1998, including the right to freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment, respect for private and family life and physical and psychological integrity, protection of Convention rights without discrimination, and the right to education. Decisions will be lawful, necessary, proportionate, fair and made in the best interests of the child. Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled students and students with special educational needs.

At the LVBS staff take action to prevent all abuse including discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. The school acts in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. It will uphold due regard to protected characteristics and it is the duty of every teacher, student and parent to support these principles. Students, parents, or any other person hearing of, involved in, or witnessing a bullying incident must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence, a trusted member of staff. Members of staff hearing of, involved in, or witnessing a bullying incident must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead directly and/or using MyConcern. A student may report verbally, in writing or by any accessible reporting route provided by the school. A member of staff who receives or has any concern must report it promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL and

record it on MyConcern in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. If a child is in immediate danger, staff must contact the emergency services and follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The ethos of LVBS is to support students' individual development in a small school community based on dignity, inclusion, tolerance and mutual respect. Bullying, intolerance and abusive behaviour may include:

- Physical intimidation, assault, harmful physical contact or threats of harm;
- Emotional or psychological abuse, including coercion, humiliation, manipulation or controlling behaviour;
- Sustained teasing, name-calling, verbal abuse or deliberately hurtful communication;
- Racist, sexist, ablist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, faith-targeted or other prejudice-based comments, taunts, harassment or conduct, including misogyny or misandry;
- Rejection, deliberate isolation, exclusion or encouraging others to exclude a student; known as "relational aggression"
- Sexual harassment or sexual violence, including unwanted sexual comments, jokes, touching or conduct;
- Teen relationship abuse;
- Misuse of social media, messaging, online platforms or technology, including cyberbullying, impersonation, doxxing, threatening or abusive messages, non-consensual image sharing and AI-generated or digitally altered abusive images;
- Hazing or initiation-type violence or rituals; and
- Any other conduct that causes, or risks causing, physical, emotional or sexual harm.

Prevention of Bullying, Intolerance and Abusive Behaviour

It is the responsibility of the whole school community - students, staff, parents and carers - to challenge and report bullying, abusive and discriminatory behaviour safely whenever it is encountered. Students should not place themselves at risk when intervening and should seek help from a trusted adult.

The whole school community will work together to recognise possible indicators that a child is experiencing or displaying bullying or abusive behaviour and to report concerns to the DSL, Deputy DSL or a Director. Staff must record safeguarding concerns on MyConcern and report them promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL. Staff must remain professionally curious: the absence of a report does not mean that abuse is not taking place.

- Friends or peers alert staff to serious concerns;
- Absence from school, repeated lateness, reluctance to attend or changes in attendance;
- Difficulties carrying out usual tasks, reduced engagement or deterioration in progress;
- Physical injuries, damaged property or unexplained loss of belongings or money;
- Difficulties with mental health or emotional wellbeing, including distress, low mood or self-harm;
- Becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet; headaches, stomach aches, anxiety or panic attacks; nightmares or disrupted sleep;
- Changes in behaviour, including alcohol or substance misuse, risk-taking or going missing;
- Changes in appearance, eating, attitude or behaviour that are unusual for the child;

- Abusive, sexualised, discriminatory or harmful behaviour towards others;
- Online or social-media concerns, including withdrawal from devices, distress following messages, threats, image sharing or group-chat exclusion; and
- Signs that a child may be experiencing prejudice-based harm or may face additional barriers to reporting because of disability, special educational needs, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, language, care experience or another vulnerability.

The school will provide well-promoted, easily understood and accessible reporting procedures so that students and the wider school community know how to seek help. Students will be offered more than one route to report, including a trusted adult, and will be reassured that concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The school will identify and monitor locations and times where bullying or abuse may be more likely, including changing rooms, corridors, lunch areas, travel to and from school, immediately before and after school, and online spaces connected to the school community. Supervision and risk-reduction measures will be reviewed in light of reported incidents and emerging patterns.

Through PSHE/RSHE, the wider curriculum, assemblies and pastoral work, students will learn:

- What bullying, cyberbullying, prejudice-based behaviour and child-on-child abuse are, including sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- Relevant law, rights and responsibilities, taught in an age-appropriate way;
- What healthy, respectful and positive relationships look like, including consent, boundaries and online conduct;
- That difference is positive and discriminatory or derogatory behaviour is unacceptable;
- That everyone is responsible for what they say, share and do, including online;
- How to respond safely if they experience or witness bullying or abuse;
- How, where and to whom incidents can be reported inside and outside school;
- That they will not be blamed, shamed or treated as creating a problem by making a report;
- How to seek support and where to find specialist services;
- About Anti-Bullying Week and other appropriate prevention activities;
- How harmful content may be created or manipulated through technology, including artificial intelligence; and
- How safeguarding themes are reinforced across the curriculum.

The **Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct** will support a respectful, anti-bullying community. The school will create an environment in which abusive, discriminatory or intolerant behaviour - whether by an individual or group, active or passive, online or offline - is not tolerated. Responses will combine safeguarding, education, support and, where appropriate, proportionate sanctions.

If any student, parent, carer or member of staff believes that bullying or abuse is taking place, the concern must be brought promptly to the DSL, Deputy DSL, a Director or any trusted member of staff. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need it for safeguarding, support, investigation or legal purposes. Absolute confidentiality cannot be promised. Staff will listen carefully, avoid leading questions, make an accurate record and explain what will happen next. The school will provide prompt,

appropriate and effective support for the child who has experienced the behaviour, the child alleged to have caused harm and any other affected children. The wishes and feelings of the child will be considered, but the school may need to share information or take protective action without consent where this is necessary to safeguard that child or others.

Where behaviour may constitute a crime, presents an immediate risk, or indicates that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL will consider referral to local authority children's social care and/or the police in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and local safeguarding partnership procedures. The school will not delay a safeguarding referral while completing an internal investigation. Disciplinary action, including suspension or permanent exclusion, may be considered in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, statutory guidance, and the principles of lawfulness, fairness and proportionality. Safeguarding support will not be made conditional on the outcome of disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

All staff will receive the required safeguarding policies and will read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Bullying Procedure

Students, parents, carers, staff or any other person experiencing, hearing of or witnessing a bullying or abusive incident should report it to the DSL, Deputy DSL, Directors or any trusted member of staff. The concern will be acknowledged, recorded and triaged promptly. The DSL or Deputy DSL will lead or oversee the safeguarding response and decide what further enquiries, risk assessment, referrals, support or disciplinary processes are required. The school will avoid asking a child to repeat their account unnecessarily and will not conduct an internal investigation in a way that prejudices a police or children's social care investigation. Factors to be considered include:

- What happened, where and when, and whether the behaviour is harmful, problematic or concerning
- The child's account, wishes and feelings, communication needs and immediate safety
- Whether the incident is isolated, repeated, escalating or part of a wider pattern
- Whether there is actual or perceived imbalance of power, coercion, intimidation, grooming or pre-planning
- Whether the behaviour is prejudice-based or discriminatory, including in relation to disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or another actual or perceived difference or vulnerability
- Whether the behaviour is sexual in nature, involves intimate images, or may amount to sexual harassment or sexual violence
- Whether technology or social media was used, including to create, alter, distribute or threaten to distribute content;
- The ages and developmental stages of the children, including any special educational needs, disabilities or other vulnerabilities;
- The impact on the child or children affected, including mental and physical health, attendance and access to education;
- Whether any child is at risk of harm and whether children's social care, the police or another agency should be contacted;
- Whether there are risks to other children or indications of a wider culture or pattern; and
- What immediate and longer-term support, safety planning and educational response are required.

- All concerns, disclosures, discussions, actions, decisions and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded promptly and accurately on MyConcern or the school's approved safeguarding system. Records will distinguish fact, observation, allegation and professional opinion and will be stored, retained and shared in accordance with the school's safeguarding records procedures and data protection law.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL, supported where appropriate by another suitable senior member of staff, will speak with the child who has reported or experienced the behaviour. The child will be listened to, taken seriously, supported and kept informed. Staff will not promise confidentiality or promise that no action will be taken.
- Any witnesses and the child alleged to have caused harm will be spoken with separately and fairly. Language will remain neutral until facts are established, and staff will avoid unnecessary confrontation or repeated questioning.
- Parents or carers will normally be informed at an appropriate stage unless doing so would place a child at greater risk, prejudice an investigation, conflict with police or children's social care advice, or otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests. The DSL will record the reason for any decision not to inform them.
- A written, proportionate risk and needs assessment will be considered and kept under review. It may address supervision, timetabling, changing arrangements, travel, online contact and other measures needed to enable all children involved to continue their education safely. The child who has reported abuse should not, as a matter of course, be moved or disadvantaged.
- Support will be tailored to need. The child who has experienced harm will be offered a trusted adult and appropriate pastoral or specialist support. The child alleged or found to have caused harm will also receive appropriate safeguarding assessment, education and support to understand and change the behaviour. Other affected children and staff will be supported where necessary.
- Where bullying or abuse is substantiated, the school will respond under its Behaviour/Sanctions Policy and safeguarding procedures. Any sanction will be proportionate and considered alongside the child's age, developmental stage, special educational needs or disabilities, vulnerabilities, intent, impact, previous behaviour and the need to safeguard all children.
- Incidents and support plans will be reviewed at agreed intervals. The school will check that the behaviour has stopped, that no retaliation has occurred and that the children involved remain safe and able to access education.
- Where harmful behaviour continues or risk increases, the DSL and senior leaders will review the plan, consider further specialist or multi-agency support and decide whether additional sanctions, suspension or permanent exclusion should be considered under the applicable policy and guidance.
- The school will identify patterns by location, time, peer group, protected characteristic or type of behaviour and will use this information to improve supervision, curriculum, training and prevention. Data used for monitoring will be handled in accordance with data protection law.
- The school will follow its Behaviour/Sanctions Policy, which is available on the school's website.

Malicious accusations against school staff

All allegations against staff will be taken seriously and managed under the school's allegations-against-staff procedures and Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate. An allegation that is unsubstantiated, unfounded or false is not necessarily malicious. No student will be sanctioned for making a report in good faith or for an allegation that cannot be

substantiated. If, following a fair process and appropriate safeguarding consideration, there is clear evidence that a student deliberately invented an allegation or made it maliciously, the DSL will first consider whether the student needs help or may have experienced abuse elsewhere. The Directors may then consider proportionate disciplinary action under the Behaviour/Sanctions Policy. Any decision about suspension or permanent exclusion will be made with the Chair of Trustees where required, in accordance with the applicable policy and guidance, and will not be automatic.

Approval body: LVBS Trustees & Directors

Revised date: September 2026

Review Schedule: 1 year, or earlier following a change in statutory guidance, legislation or local safeguarding arrangements

Next review date: September 2027