Anti-bullying policy (young people)

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that our young people learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will our young people be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at Engaging Potential.

This policy has been designed in accordance with West Berkshire Children and Young People's Trust's Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance 'Safe to Live and Learn' (Nov 2007), and the Department for Education's guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies" (2011).

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

- **physical** – includes hitting, kicking, theft, damage to belongings, extortion
- **verbal / mental** – includes teasing, name calling, making offensive remarks, threats, face to face or by text, phone, email, instant messaging, internet chat rooms or websites
- **indirect / mental** – includes spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups, the look, the whisper behind the hand, scorn and derision, increasingly through electronic means (cyberbullying)

Young people who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences, becoming increasingly boisterous, starting to bully others, or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Young people are encouraged to report bullying and parents / carers are encouraged to share their concerns if they recognise any of these characteristics.

EP's staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with policy.

Cyber- bullying
Cyber- bullying, like all bullying, is taken very seriously at EP. The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories available.

When dealing with cyber bullying, EP refers to the DfE guidance on Cyber Bullying – Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools (2007), a copy of which is held in the main office and is also available online and on the server.

Implementation
The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:
- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- a clear account of the incident will be recorded on Webrisk
- The Head / Project Manager / senior member of staff will interview all concerned and will sign off the Webrisk report and submit it to West Berkshire Council
- parents will be kept informed
- punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation will all parties concerned

Young people who have been bullied will be supported by:
- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff
- being reassured
- offering continuous support
- working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence through mentoring

Young people who have bullied will be helped by:
- discussing what happened
- discovering why the young person became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents / carers to help change the attitude of the young person
- providing additional support through mentoring to encourage them to change their behaviour

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:
- official warnings to cease offending
- exclusion from certain activities
- minor fixed-term exclusion
- major fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

Within the curriculum EP will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in lessons and activities in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

The young people themselves are also given the opportunity, during induction, to sign an ICT Acceptable Use policy, which lays out the rules that they must follow in order to use ICT at EP.

Involving parents & carers
EP feels that it is important that parents and carers feel that the safety and well-being of their children is a primary concern. Parents and carers whose children exhibit bullying behaviour towards other children are seen as partners to help with problem resolution rather than being blamed and held responsible for their children's actions.

EP will support parents and carers by involving them as early as possible in any concerns about their child and by sharing records of incidents with them. EP will also actively encourage them to share any concerns about changes in behaviour that could be attributed to bullying.

With reference to cyber-bullying, parents are asked to sign a consent form that will allow their child to access the internet for educational purposes.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

EP monitors behaviour related reports as part of the annual cycle of review. This helps to evaluate whether our approach to bullying is effective and to help identify areas for improvement and/or particular patterns of behaviour.

EP will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout EP.