TACKLING BULLYING

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Version 2 Sep 24	Layout improvement and language changes to bring into alignment with other policies.
Version 3 Sep 25	New Legal and Guidance Framework Section. Addition of Prejudice-Based Bullying. Expanded Cyberbullying Content to includes risks linked to AI-generated content, deepfakes, manipulated media, and image-based abuse, in line with KCSIE 2025. Stronger Preventative Actions and Training Commitment. Procedure now includes instruction to record all bullying incidents on MyConcern retiring paper forms.
Version 4 Sep 26	Comprehensive review. Updated to reflect current legislation and statutory guidance, modernised terminology, strengthened safeguarding approach and aligned with the Provision's current policies and procedures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Overworld AMP Limited ("the Provision") is committed to providing a caring, inclusive and safe environment where all young people are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to ensure that every young person can learn, develop and participate in a relaxed, supportive and secure atmosphere free from bullying or intimidation.

Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We are committed to responding promptly, fairly and effectively to all concerns, ensuring that young people feel confident to speak to a member of staff if they experience or witness bullying.

Persistent bullying can have a significant impact on a young person's emotional wellbeing, confidence, relationships and ability to learn, with effects that may continue into adulthood. It is therefore the responsibility of everyone within the Provision to promote kindness, understanding and respect, helping to create a culture where bullying is challenged and everyone feels safe, valued and included.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors and young people attending the Provision. It applies to behaviour occurring on site, during educational visits, transport arranged by the Provision, online and in any context connected with the Provision where the welfare, safety or wellbeing of a young person or member of staff may be affected.

3. LEGAL AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

This policy should be read alongside the Provision's:

- Safeguarding and Young Person Protection Policies;
- Positive Interactions Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy;
- Sexual Harassment; and
- The Employee Handbook

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The CEO has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Provision promotes a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which bullying is not tolerated. The CEO will ensure appropriate policies, procedures and resources are in place to prevent, identify and respond to bullying effectively.

4.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for providing advice and guidance where bullying raises safeguarding concerns, ensuring appropriate action is taken, liaising with external agencies where necessary, and overseeing the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents through the Provision's safeguarding systems.

4.3 All Staff, volunteers and contractors are responsible for:

- promoting a culture of respect, kindness and inclusion;
- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times;
- recognising the signs of bullying and taking all concerns seriously;
- responding promptly to reports or disclosures of bullying;
- recording concerns in accordance with the Provision's safeguarding procedures; and
- working collaboratively with families and partner agencies where appropriate to support young people.

4.4 Young People are encouraged to treat others with respect, report bullying or concerns about bullying to a trusted adult and contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.

4.5 Parents, Carers, Commissioners and Professionals are expected to work in partnership with the Provision by raising concerns promptly, supporting agreed interventions and promoting respectful behaviour both within and outside the Provision.

5. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour that intentionally or repeatedly causes physical, emotional, psychological or social harm and is characterised by an imbalance of power between those involved. Bullying may be carried out by an individual or a group and can occur face-to-face, online or through other forms of communication.

Bullying may include:

- physical aggression;
- verbal abuse, including name-calling or threats;
- emotional or psychological abuse, including intimidation, humiliation, exclusion or coercion;
- discriminatory or prejudice-based behaviour;
- damage to belongings or theft;
- online or technology-assisted abuse.

Whilst bullying is usually repeated behaviour, the Provision recognises that a single serious incident may have a significant impact on a young person's wellbeing and will always be taken seriously.

7. PREJUDICE-BASED BULLYING

Prejudice-based bullying targets an individual because of a real or perceived protected characteristic or other aspect of their identity. This includes disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010.

The Provision recognises that prejudice-based bullying may include racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist or faith-based abuse, and that such behaviour may also constitute hate incidents or hate crime.

All incidents will be treated seriously, recorded appropriately and responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

8. CYBER BULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place through digital technologies or online platforms. It may occur through mobile phones, social media, messaging services, gaming platforms, livestreaming services, websites, email or other forms of electronic communication. Cyberbullying can occur at any time and may have a significant impact on a young person's emotional wellbeing, safety and development.

Examples of cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:

- sending threatening, abusive or intimidating messages;
- posting or sharing humiliating, offensive or discriminatory comments about another person;
- deliberately excluding someone from online groups or activities;
- creating fake accounts or impersonating another person;
- sharing confidential or personal information without consent;

- encouraging others to target or harass an individual online;
- creating, sharing or using AI-generated content, manipulated images, deepfakes or synthetic media to deceive, intimidate, embarrass or harm another person;
- image-based abuse, including the non-consensual creation, sharing or threatening to share intimate or altered images; and
- recording, livestreaming or distributing images or videos of an individual without their knowledge or consent where this is intended to cause harm or distress.

The Provision recognises that cyberbullying may occur both within and outside of Provision activities. Where online behaviour has the potential to impact the safety, wellbeing or education of a young person, it will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with the Provision's safeguarding procedures. All concerns should be reported promptly and recorded on MyConcern.

Further guidance is available in the Provision's Online Safety Policy.

9. SHARING NUDE OR SEMI-NUDE IMAGES

The creation, possession or sharing of nude or semi-nude images involving children or young people is a safeguarding concern and will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance and the Provision's safeguarding procedures.

Staff must never ask to view, copy, download, forward or store such images unless specifically directed to do so by the police or safeguarding professionals.

Any concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL and recorded on MyConcern.

10. YOUNG PERSON-ON-YOUNG PERSON ABUSE

Bullying may form part of a wider pattern of young person-on-young person abuse. This can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, coercive or controlling behaviour, initiation or hazing-type violence, exploitation, image-based abuse and online abuse.

The Provision recognises that abuse can occur between young people of any age, gender, ability or background. It may take place in person, online or through the use of digital technologies. Abuse may occur between individuals of a similar age or developmental stage, or where there is an imbalance of power.

All allegations or concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly. Where bullying or abusive behaviour raises safeguarding concerns, staff must follow the Provision's *Young Person Protection Policy* without delay. Appropriate action will be taken to safeguard everyone involved, recognising that both the person experiencing harm and the person displaying harmful behaviour may require support.

The Provision adopts a trauma-informed and restorative approach wherever appropriate, whilst ensuring that safeguarding remains the primary consideration.

11. STAFF VICTIMISING YOUNG PEOPLE

All staff are expected to maintain safe, professional and respectful relationships with young people.

Behaviour by staff that humiliates, intimidates, ridicules, unfairly targets or otherwise abuses their position of trust will not be tolerated and may constitute misconduct or safeguarding concerns.

Any young person who feels uncomfortable about the behaviour of a member of staff should be encouraged to speak to a trusted adult. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the Provision's *Young Person Protection Policy and Employee Handbook*.

12. ADULTS BEING BULLIED

The Provision also recognises that bullying may occur between adults, including staff, volunteers, visitors, parents, carers and professionals working with the Provision.

Such concerns will be managed through the appropriate procedures, including the *Grievance* or *Whistleblowing Procedure* in the *Employee Handbook, the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy or Sexual Harassment Policy*, where applicable.

13. PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

The Provision seeks to prevent bullying by:

- promoting an inclusive and respectful culture;
- teaching positive relationships;
- recognising prejudice-based behaviour early;
- providing safeguarding and online safety education;
- training staff;
- encouraging young people to report concerns;
- recording concerns promptly on MyConcern;
- working with families and professionals where appropriate;
- monitoring patterns and trends to inform practice

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Provision will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy through the review of bullying concerns, safeguarding records, feedback from young people and staff, and any emerging themes or patterns. Lessons learned from incidents, changes in legislation, statutory guidance or best practice will be used to inform policy development, staff training and preventative measures.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or organisational practice.