THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GROUP LTD

Anti-bullying Policy

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Note: This policy has been developed and reviewed by The Alternative School Group Limited using internal expertise, professional judgement, current statutory guidance and appropriate digital tools. Final approval and responsibility for the policy rests with The Alternative School Group Limited.

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1. Statement of Intent

TAS will provide a secure, caring, inclusive and therapeutic community in which every child is respected and can learn and thrive. Bullying, discriminatory conduct and child-on-child abuse are not tolerated. TAS recognises the particular vulnerabilities and communication needs of pupils with SEND. All reports will be listened to, recorded, assessed and acted upon proportionately. The safety and wishes of the child will inform decisions, without overriding safeguarding duties.

2. Scope and Governance

This policy applies to all pupils at TAS school provisions and, through the dedicated early years section. It covers conduct on-site, during activities, on transport and online or off-site where it affects a child's safety or the school community. The proprietor/group leadership approves and monitors the policy; each Headteacher implements it at their school. The relevant DSL and deputies oversee safeguarding escalation. Workplace concerns between adults are addressed under the separate Bullying and Harassment at Work Policy.

3. Definition and Types

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally, commonly repeated over time and involving a real or perceived power imbalance. Serious single incidents may still constitute abuse, harassment, discrimination or safeguarding concerns and must not be dismissed because they are not repeated. Forms include physical, verbal, relational/exclusionary, prejudicial and discriminatory bullying; online abuse, image-based abuse and misuse of AI or deepfakes; coercion and exploitation. Protected-characteristic and SEND-related incidents require specific consideration, recording and support.

4. Prevention and Curriculum

TAS will model respectful relationships, promote inclusion, use PSHE/relationships education, pupil voice, mentoring, staff supervision and tailored communication aids, and teach safe online behaviour. Children and families will receive accessible information on how to report concerns. Staff will receive induction and refreshers. Leaders will review locations, transitions, transport and online contexts where incidents arise.

5. Reporting, Recording and Immediate Response

A child, parent, visitor or staff member may report to any trusted adult, teacher, Headteacher, or DSL. Staff receiving a report must listen without promising secrecy, take immediate steps to keep children safe and pass safeguarding concerns to the DSL without delay. School incidents are recorded in Behaviour Watch, subject to confirming current TAS practice. Record facts, dates, people involved, child's own words, protected-characteristic indicators, actions, decisions, rationale, parental contact and follow-up. Restrict access to authorised staff and share information lawfully.

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6. Investigation and Support

The designated manager will assess risk and hear children separately, with communication support where required; avoid repeated questioning that could compromise safeguarding or police enquiries. Provide safety planning and pastoral support for affected children and assess support needs of children whose behaviour caused harm. Inform parents/carers appropriately unless doing so increases risk or conflicts with safeguarding advice. Review whether interventions have stopped the behaviour and whether the child feels safe.

7. Safeguarding and Child-on-Child Abuse

Bullying may be a child-protection matter, especially where there is significant harm, sexual violence/harassment, exploitation, threats, discriminatory abuse or harmful online imagery. Follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, KCSIE 2026 in schools. The DSL determines whether early help, children's social care, police or other specialist referral is required, using local procedures. Do not use mediation or restorative meetings where there is coercion, sexual violence, a material power imbalance or an unresolved safety risk.

8. Responses, Sanctions and Restorative Approaches

Responses will be fair, proportionate, developmentally appropriate and informed by disability/SEND and reasonable adjustments. Options include supervised separation, additional support, behaviour plans, family meetings and, where safe and voluntary, restorative work. Schools may use sanctions in accordance with the Relationships, Responsibility and Community Policy and applicable law. Suspension or permanent exclusion must follow the legal regime relevant to that independent school and its contractual arrangements. Off-site conduct will be addressed within lawful school powers and safeguarding responsibilities.

9. Early Years Arrangements

Follow the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (September 2026), the Childcare Act 2006 and Ofsted's early years inspection toolkit. Toddlers and young children may bite, push, grab or struggle with sharing as part of development; staff should not automatically label such behaviour as bullying. Practitioners will observe context, intervene calmly, protect children, support co-regulation and language/communication, and work with parents on consistent plans. Repeated targeting, exclusion or serious harmful behaviour will be assessed for safeguarding and additional needs. No humiliating or punitive response is permitted. The early years manager will ensure appropriate incident records, safeguarding referrals, parent communications and risk review; the registered provider will oversee compliance. Staff must follow the early years separate safeguarding, intimate care, complaints procedures together with the relevant sections in the group Relationships Responsibility and Community Policy and SEND Policy. Ofsted notification duties for allegations of harm must be handled under the current EYFS requirements.

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10. Monitoring, Complaints and Review

Each provision will review incident frequency, recurrence, patterns involving protected characteristics, attendance, pupil/parent feedback, effectiveness of follow-up and staff training. Regular reviews will look for themes across sites while respecting confidentiality. Families may use the published complaints procedure if dissatisfied. This policy will be reviewed annually and after significant incidents or legislative changes.

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