BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

1) **Introduction**
    a) We believe that all stakeholders have the right to study, work and live in an environment that is safe and free from bullying and harassment.
    b) This policy aims to achieve a safe, healthy, and fair learning environment where every learner can make the most of their learning experience.
    c) This policy should be read alongside ETT's separate Safeguarding Policy, which outlines child protection procedures, the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and processes for managing safeguarding concerns including peer-on-peer abuse that meets the threshold of significant harm.
    d) ETT recognises the strengthened legal duties introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025, effective from 30 October 2026. These duties require employers to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment and impose liability where employees are harassed by third parties and the employer has failed to take such steps. This policy sets out how ETT will meet these duties proactively and how it will respond when incidents occur.
2) **Purpose and Preventative Commitment**
    a) Fostering an environment where bullying and harassment are clearly unacceptable, thereby reducing the likelihood of such behaviour occurring.
    b) ETT is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and in any work-related environment. This includes identifying and assessing potential risks, implementing appropriate preventative measures, providing training and guidance, and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of these arrangements.
    c) ETT will not wait for a complaint to be made before taking action to address potential risks of sexual harassment. The organisation adopts a proactive, preventative approach in line with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) 8-step guide for preventing sexual harassment at work.
    d) Deterring bullying or harassing behaviour, detecting it when it occurs, and dealing with it on a case-by-case basis, taking necessary action where required.
    e) Encouraging the reporting of bullying or harassing behaviour at all levels.
    f) Setting out strategies and mechanisms to respond to allegations of bullying and harassment and to resolve complaints.
    g) Complying with duties under the Equality Act 2010.
    h) Complying with statutory safeguarding expectations under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2025
3) **Scope of the Policy**
    a) This policy applies to any person enrolled on a programme with ETT, and all staff, regardless of age, gender, nationality, or other personal circumstances.

b) These provisions apply at all times on ETT premises without exception. They also apply in learner workplaces where ETT staff are operating, and, where appropriate, in situations where learners and/or staff are not directly engaged in ETT activities. This includes, but is not limited to, online behaviour, off-site activities, and any interactions arising from relationships formed through involvement with ETT.

c) This policy relates to bullying and harassment perpetrated by or against (non-exhaustive list):
   i) Learners
   ii) Trainers, Training Officers and other members of ETT staff
   iii) Visitors to ETT premises
   iv) Members of the general public
   v) Employers, workplace supervisors, subcontractors, and their employees
   vi) Clients, customers, and service users

d) ETT notes that the statutory employment protections under the Employment Rights Act 2025 apply to employees. However, ETT intentionally retains this wider policy scope to protect learners and other stakeholders, reflecting its organisational and safeguarding responsibilities.

4) Third-Party Harassment

a) ETT recognises that sexual harassment and other forms of harassment can be perpetrated by third parties, including learners, employers, workplace supervisors, subcontractors, customers, visitors, and members of the public.

b) ETT will take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour and will not tolerate harassment of its staff or learners by third parties. This duty covers harassment related to sexual harassment as well as harassment related to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (including age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

c) Where third-party harassment occurs or is reported, ETT will take appropriate action. This may include:
   i) Investigating the incident.
   ii) Taking steps to protect the affected individual (including interim measures).
   iii) Addressing the behaviour directly with the third party or their organisation.
   iv) Reviewing risk assessments and preventative arrangements.
   v) Restricting access to ETT premises or activities where appropriate.
   vi) Reviewing or terminating contractual arrangements (including subcontracts or employer placement agreements) where necessary.

d) This section is particularly relevant to ETT because of its relationships with employers, workplace supervisors, subcontractors, and learners. The steps ETT takes will be proportionate to the risks identified, the sector, and the nature of the work.

5) Subcontracting and Employer Accountability

a) ETT undertakes thorough due diligence on all subcontractors prior to engagement. This includes:
    i) Obtaining and reviewing the subcontractor's own policies and procedures, including their Bullying and Harassment Policy, to ensure alignment with ETT's standards.
    ii) Checking that employers and subcontractors have appropriate arrangements for preventing and dealing with sexual harassment and third-party harassment, including their own preventative duty compliance.
    iii) Using ongoing monitoring activities – such as observations of teaching, learning and assessment, and Learner Voice meetings to confirm that there is no evidence of bullying or harassment affecting learners on ETT programmes delivered by subcontractors.
    iv) Where a subcontractor's arrangements are found to be inadequate, ETT will require corrective action and, if necessary, terminate the subcontracting arrangement.

6) Definitions

a) Learner: Any individual enrolled on a programme at ETT, at any location associated with ETT.
b) Victim: Any individual who believes they have been subject to bullying or harassment.
c) Witness/Complainant: Anyone who has witnessed instances of bullying or harassment.
d) Offender: Any individual accused of conduct that may constitute bullying or harassment as defined in this policy. For this document, the word 'offender' is used both for someone who has an allegation made against them and for some who is confirmed as having bullied or harassed someone. It does not automatically imply guilt.
e) Bullying defined in line with DfE guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017): "Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a learner is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences or perceived differences". Examples are given in Appendix A.
f) Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010: "Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual". Examples are given in Appendix A.
g) Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010):
    i) Age
    ii) Disability

iii) Gender reassignment
iv) Marriage and civil partnership
v) Pregnancy and maternity
vi) Race
vii) Religion or belief
viii) Sex
ix) Sexual orientation

7) Sexual Harassment Risk Assessments

a) ETT will identify circumstances in which sexual harassment (and other forms of harassment) might occur and will assess and manage those risks. This is a core component of the preventative duty.

b) Risk assessments will be conducted to:
   i) assess risks in ETT workplaces and learning environments,
   ii) consider risks when learners are working at employer premises,
   iii) consider risks arising from interactions between staff, learners, employers, subcontractors, and third parties,
   iv) consider online interactions and work-related social events,
   v) review risks following any incident or complaint, and
   vi) record preventative actions and monitor whether they are effective.

c) Risk assessments will be proportionate to the circumstances and regularly reviewed. ETT will retain evidence of these assessments and resulting action plans to demonstrate compliance.

8) Staff Training and Awareness

a) ETT will provide appropriate training for all staff, and particularly for:
   i) All staff
   ii) Managers and senior leaders (including behaviour-based training to support them in setting the 'tone from the top')
   iii) Individuals responsible for investigating complaints
   iv) Staff who regularly work with employers, subcontractors, and learners in workplace settings

b) Training will cover:
   i) Recognising sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviours
   ii) Responding to disclosures and reports
   iii) Understanding third-party harassment and the organisation's duties
   iv) Reporting routes and the responsibility to challenge inappropriate conduct
   v) De-escalation and staff safety where relevant

c) Training completion will be recorded and monitored as part of ETT's assurance arrangements.

9) Peer-on-Peer Abuse (Child-on-Child Abuse)

a) ETT recognises that peer-on-peer abuse (also referred to as child-on-child abuse) is a safeguarding matter, not merely a behavioural issue. This includes, but is not limited to:

i) Sexual violence and sexual harassment (as detailed in KCSIE 2025 Part 5)
ii) Upskirting
iii) Coercive or controlling behaviour
iv) Sexting (sharing of nude/semi-nude images)
v) Initiation or hazing-type exploitation
vi) Bullying that has a significant sexual or violent element

b) All such incidents will be assessed to determine whether they meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral. Where they do, the matter will be managed under ETT's Safeguarding Policy, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed immediately.
c) Where the behaviour does not meet the safeguarding threshold, it will be managed under the disciplinary and complaints procedures referenced in this policy.
d) Learners who report peer-on-peer abuse will be supported without fear of victimisation. ETT will never dismiss sexualised or violent peer behaviour as "banter" or "growing up".

10) General Principles for the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment

a) ETT will always promote an anti-bullying and anti-harassment culture among its learners.
b) ETT will never condone or tolerate any form of bullying or harassment under any circumstances, including that perpetrated by visitors or members of the public.
c) ETT will encourage and support the disclosure and reporting of any bullying or harassment.
d) Any reported incident will be treated seriously; however trivial it may seem initially. Confidentiality will be guaranteed to victims or complainants, subject to safeguarding duties (where a risk of serious harm exists, confidentiality may need to be breached in line with the Safeguarding Policy).
e) ETT will not permit victimisation or retaliation against anyone who reports harassment, supports a complaint, or participates in an investigation. Any such behaviour will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

11) Responsibility of Learners

a) All ETT learners are expected to:
i) Help promote an anti-bullying and anti-harassment culture by adhering to this policy and refraining from bullying or harassing behaviour.
ii) Prevent bullying and harassment by being sensitive to the reactions and needs of others.
iii) Discourage bullying and harassment by others, making it clear that such conduct is unacceptable, and supporting individuals taking steps to stop it.
iv) Speak up and report any incidents to a member of staff they trust if they believe they have been subject to, or have witnessed, harassment or bullying.

12) Responding to Bullying or Harassment

a) We encourage any person who feels they are a victim or witness of bullying or harassment to talk to us early so we can work to stop the negative behaviour against them or others.
b) Individuals do not need to attempt an informal resolution before making a formal complaint. They have the right to raise a formal complaint at any stage.
c) Where a complaint concerns the person's line manager, or the person who would normally receive the complaint, the individual may report the matter directly to the Senior Management Team (SMT) or, where appropriate, to the ETT Trustees (see Section 13(b)(iv)).
d) When an allegation is raised, ETT will:
    i) Take it seriously and investigate all incidents thoroughly.
    ii) Deal with each incident individually and assess the needs of each case separately following either the informal or formal process set out in this document.
    iii) Take immediate action to prevent escalation or further incidents, which may include:
        (1) Imposition of sanctions, up to removal from programme
        (2) Obtaining an apology
        (3) Informing parents/carers of those involved (if under 18)
        (4) Informing employers where appropriate
        (5) Providing advice and support
        (6) Implementing interim protective measures (e.g. separation of parties, temporary changes to working or learning arrangements) while an investigation is ongoing.
e) ETT will not encourage a person reporting sexual harassment to confront the alleged perpetrator. The formal process is available immediately and should be used where preferred.

13) Reporting & Resolving Bullying or Harassment

a) Informal process (optional)
    i) Where the victim or witness feels able and safe to do so, they may choose to tell the offender to stop and make it clear that their behaviour is unwelcome. This may be done verbally or in writing. A copy of any written communication should be kept.
    ii) If the victim or witness feels unable to approach the offender, they should speak to an ETT member of staff who will do so on their behalf, if the individual wishes this to happen.
    iii) An individual who is made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable should listen to the concerns, respect the other person’s point of view, acknowledge the other person’s perception, agree on behavioural changes, and apologise if appropriate.
b) Formal process

i) If the informal approach is ignored, inappropriate, or not desired by the complainant, the victim or witness should report the bullying or harassment to a member of ETT staff (if not done so already). A formal complaint can be made without any prior informal attempt.
ii) An ETT staff member accepting a disclosure of bully or harassment will make written notes and report the allegation to the Senior Management Team (SMT) in person and/or via a cause for concern form.
iii) If at any point the reported behaviour includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, or any element suggesting significant harm, the staff member receiving the report must immediately refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay, and the matter will proceed under the Safeguarding Policy rather than solely under this or the Complaints & Grievance Procedure.
iv) In circumstances where an allegation involves the CEO, a complaint may be raised directly with the ETT Trustees (trustee@theengineeringtrust.org), who will appoint a nominee to progress the matter.
v) The SMT or Trustee will investigate in line with the Complaints & Grievance Procedure. All matters will be handled seriously, confidentially and in a sensitive nature so as not to negatively impact the victim or witness.
vi) ETT will interview victims, witnesses, or offenders separately.
vii) Timescales will be set by the investigator based on the gravity of allegations, number of individuals involved, extent of investigation, and other circumstances. Timescales will be communicated in writing to all parties.
viii) In cases of a serious allegation, the offender may be suspended pending further investigation or pending DSL-led safeguarding assessment.
ix) If the investigation confirms that bullying or harassment has taken place, the offender will be dealt with under ETT's Disciplinary Procedure. Where the behaviour meets a safeguarding threshold or may be considered to have broken the law, third party agencies will be involved.
x) If the investigation reveals that allegations were malicious or vexatious, the matter will be dealt with under ETT's Disciplinary Procedure.
xi) The complainant will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation, subject to confidentiality requirements and any safeguarding restrictions.

c) Appeals
i) Appeals against a disciplinary sanction will follow the appeals process in the Disciplinary Procedure.
ii) Appeals regarding the outcome by a victim or witness will follow the appeals process in the Complaints Procedure.
iii) If dissatisfied with ETT's response, the victim or witness should put this in writing, and it will be referred to the ETT Trustees for further consideration.

14) Learners in the Workplace (Specific Considerations)

a) ETT recognises that learners may experience sexual harassment or third-party harassment while undertaking work placements or employment with an employer.
b) ETT will explicitly
    i) Support learners who report sexual harassment at their place of work.
    ii) Liaise with the employer to address concerns and require appropriate action.
    iii) Escalate safeguarding concerns to the DSL where appropriate.
    iv) Monitor whether the employer has taken appropriate action.
    v) Consider whether a learner should be removed from a particular workplace while concerns are investigated.
    vi) Link directly to the Safeguarding Policy and subcontractor arrangements.

15) **Monitoring and Review**

a) ETT will conduct an annual review of its sexual harassment prevention arrangements. This will include monitoring:
    i) The number and nature of complaints (including third-party incidents).
    ii) Patterns or recurring issues.
    iii) Training completion rates.
    iv) The effectiveness of preventative measures and risk assessments.
    v) Feedback from staff and learners.
b) ETT will retain evidence of risk assessments, training records, complaints, and preventative actions to demonstrate that arrangements are actively implemented and monitored, in line with EHRC guidance.
c) This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislative or regulatory changes require it.

Appendix A – Examples (non-exhaustive)

1) Bullying
    a) Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, taking, damaging, or hiding possessions.
    b) Verbal: name-calling, taunting, teasing, mimicking, insulting, demanding money.
    c) Exclusionary: intimidating, isolating, or excluding a person from a group.
    d) General unkindness: spreading rumours, initiation ceremonies, exploitation, writing unkind notes, texts, or emails.
    e) Cyber bullying: using internet, mobile phones, social networking sites, email, digital cameras, web documents, online blogs to deliberately upset someone. ETT will take action to deal with cyber bullying regardless of where it takes place, including where it brings ETT's reputation into disrepute.
    f) Additional forms of bullying:
        i) Sexual
        ii) Sexist
        iii) Racist or related to religion, belief, or culture
        iv) Related to sexual orientation (homophobic)
        v) Related to pregnancy and maternity

vi) Related to home or economic circumstances
vii) Related to disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health, or appearance

2) Harassment
   a) Sexist: displaying power over a person because of gender through disparaging remarks or threatening behaviour.
   b) Sexual harassment:
      i) Unwanted sexual comments or remarks
      ii) Sexualised jokes or inappropriate conversations
      iii) Unwanted sexual advances
      iv) Repeated requests for dates or sexual contact
      v) Inappropriate touching or physical contact
      vi) Sexual gestures or suggestive behaviour
      vii) Sharing sexually explicit images or material
      viii) Sending inappropriate sexual messages, emails, or images
      ix) Sexually suggestive comments on social media
      x) Intrusive questions about someone's private or sexual life
      xi) Conduct that creates a sexually intimidating or hostile environment
      xii) A single incident can constitute sexual harassment; it does not have to be repeated
   c) On grounds of sexual orientation: homophobic remarks, unwelcome jokes, threats to disclose sexuality, intimate questions about sexual activity.
   d) Racial: inappropriate questioning or jokes about racial/ethnic origin, offensive graffiti, intimidating behaviour including threatening gestures.
   e) Personal: making fun of personal circumstances or appearance.
   f) Age: derogatory age-related remarks, unjustifiable dismissal of suggestions on grounds of age.
   g) Stalking: physical or psychological – repeated or alarming voicemail/email messages, following people home, approaching others for personal information.

Document Control

Version	Date	Author(s)	Changes
1.1	12/5/26	AM/MV	Annual Review
1.2	30/10/26	AM/MV	Amendments to reflect the Employment Rights Act 2025 (in force 30 October 2026), including the strengthened preventative duty for sexual harassment and new liability for third-party harassment. Incorporates EHRC 8-step guidance.