

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

<b>SCOPE:</b>	Academy Policy
<b>AUTHOR/ORIGINATOR:</b>	Principal
<b>NAME OF RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL:</b>	Academy Principal
<b>APPROVING COMMITTEE:</b>	Academy Committee
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**Outstanding Achievement for All**

## Contents

Introduction.....	4
Legal framework.....	4
What is bullying?.....	4
Bullying is not: .....	5
The Role of Children.....	5
The Role of Staff.....	6
The Role of Academy Advisory Committee.....	6
The Role of the Principal.....	6
The Role of Parents/Carers .....	6
Statutory implications .....	7
Prevention.....	8
Child-on-child abuse.....	8
Cyberbullying.....	9
Procedures – Recording .....	10
Victim.....	12
Perpetrator.....	12
Parents/Carers.....	12
Reconciliation .....	12
Sanctions.....	13
Support.....	13
Appendix .....	14

## Statement of Intent

Ambitions Academies Trust (AAT) is committed to taking all steps possible to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage and to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

AAT is committed to taking positive action with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness across AAT.

This policy must be adhered to by all staff, pupils, parents/carers and visitors.

Signed:

Principal

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stan Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

CEO

Date

## Introduction

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. Our anti-bullying policy ensures that all of our children can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We use the acronyms STOP (Several Times On Purpose) and SOS (Speak Out Straightaway). This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening, is expected to tell the staff, parents or a trusted adult. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- PSHE and SRE Policy
- Exclusion Policy

## What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim, it can be direct (physical/verbal) or indirect (being ignored or cyber bullying). It is different from other types of aggressive behaviour because it is defined as something that

happens more than once and is targeted specifically at an individual or group.

The children are taught that bullying means Several Times On Purpose.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures;
  - Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
  - Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
  - Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
  - Cyber – all areas of the internet, such as email and social media platform misuse; mobile threats by text messaging and phone call; misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video facilities.

It can also include material bullying which includes damage to belongings and extortion.

Perpetrators may use different pretexts as the basis of their bullying, basing their comments or actions on:

- The religious background or faith of the person bullied;
- The ethnic background or skin colour of the victim
- A disability, perceived physical difficulty or Special Educational Need;
- The race of the victim e.g. racist name calling, taunts, graffiti or gestures;
- The sexuality of the victim e.g. homophobic bullying.
- Perceived social status of the victim e.g. parental occupations or perceived 'quality' of clothing/belongings
- Previous actions/incidents/experiences

### **Bullying is not:**

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasional falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional "joke" is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the occasional name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

### **The Role of Children**

- Children are encouraged to Speak Out Straightaway (SOS)
- They are encouraged to report possible bullying to any member of staff they trust, a friend or a member of their family;
- Children may post a message in the red letter boxes located on each classroom corridor to voice concerns
- The letter box can be used for children's concerns; they can request to talk to someone. The boxes will be checked daily by the Inclusion Team.
- Children who are "bystanders" are encouraged to support their peers by reporting any suspected bullying.
- They are encouraged to walk away from dangerous situations, avoid involving other pupils and keeping evidence of cyberbullying, if applicable.

## The Role of Staff

- All incidents of suspected bullying will be dealt with by the member of staff they are reported to;
- All members of staff are responsible for the health and wellbeing of the children and have a duty to respond seriously to any claim of bullying;
- If they are unable to investigate the matter must be referred immediately to a senior member of staff;
- The Principal will also be informed and if bullying is confirmed, it will be logged in the school Bullying Log which is kept in the Inclusion Office – all instances of bullying and alleged bullying will be recorded and monitored for patterns of behaviour.

## The Role of Academy Advisory Committee

- The Academy Advisory Committee supports the Principal in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our Academy. The Academy Advisory Committee will not condone any bullying at all in our Academy, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.
- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.

## The Role of the Principal

- It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement the school anti-bullying policy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Principal reports to the Academy Advisory Committee about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- The Principal ensures that all children know that bullying is unacceptable behaviour.
- The Principal leads the Academy in making our vision a reality, where all members of the learning community nurture, value, respect and care for each other.

## The Role of Parents/Carers

- Look out for unusual behaviour in your children. (See Appendix)
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back.
- Monitor the activity of your child online/on mobile telephones
- Reinforce the Academy's policy concerning bullying and make sure your child is not afraid to ask for help.
- Parents are encouraged to share any concerns with their child's class teacher or a member of senior management
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem

- If necessary and appropriate, particularly if behaviour in school is repeated out of school, the police will be consulted.
- If your child has been bullied, please do not approach the perpetrator on the playground or their parents or involve an older child to deal with the bully. Please inform the school immediately and we will deal with it following the school procedures.

## Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Principal will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Principal understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.
- Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:
- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crime.

## Prevention

We aim to help children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, children may be asked to:

- Sign a behaviour expectation contract when they start at the Academy as well as their parents;
- Write and sign class rules at the start of each year;
- Write stories or poems, or draw pictures about bullying;
- Read stories about bullying or have them read to in class or assembly;
- Use role play and 'hot-seating' to help create feelings of empathy;
- Have discussions about bullying and why it should not happen.

The Academy has a range of strategies in place to help children work and behave co-operatively in order to minimise the possibility of bullying taking place.

- The Academy has weekly assemblies focussed around PSHE themes of bullying, friendship and expected behavior, in line with the Primary Relationships and Health Education.
- The Academy has a clear Behaviour for Learning policy that rewards positive behaviour. The Academy rules are clear and straightforward and focus on positive attitudes.
- The Academy takes a pro-active stance towards any challenging behaviour.
- The Academy works closely with the local police to make sure that any incidents outside school are reported to the school so that children involved can then be monitored inside the Academy, as appropriate.
- Children are encouraged to help perpetrators and victims reflect upon their actions.
- Both children and parents are made aware of how to use the internet safely and of the possibilities of cyber bullying.
- The Academy works with the Safer Schools Team to promote online safety both through informative visits to the Academy and through practical involvement when resolving any incidents that have occurred.

## Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers. Staff will take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims, will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will never justify sexual harassment,



e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours. Staff will also be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSC), where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

The school’s stance on addressing child-on-child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school’s approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim’s phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

**NB.** The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The Academy has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the procedures set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents. Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the [‘Signs of bullying’](#) section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents are advised to report to the Principal if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with the 'Support' sections of this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. However, in these situations, parental communication would always be sought.

## Procedures – Recording

- All serious behaviour incidents are recorded. These are kept on the Incident Log and are periodically checked to see if there are patterns of behaviour that may be regarded as bullying.
- During this process, the alleged victim, perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately.

- Confirmed incidents of bullying are recorded in the Bullying Log which is used to highlight repeat incidents.
- The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for co-ordinating the recording system, liaising with class teachers and other staff to ensure that incidents of bullying are not missed.
- The Senior Leadership Team will aim to gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Periodic analysis of incident forms i.e. numbers of incidents, numbers of children involved, analysis of sanctions etc. will help staff to measure the success of our policies of poor or challenging behaviour.
- The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.

## Procedures - Outcomes

### Victim

- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated immediately and the bullying stopped.
- Victims will be reassured that they have done nothing to deserve the bullying and that what may have happened is not their 'fault'.
- The victim will be consulted with on how to rebuild relationships with the perpetrator if they want to do this.
- Referral to the pastoral team may be considered appropriate.
- Following investigations, staff will periodically 'check in' with a child that has been the victim of bullying to ensure that the child feels happy and secure at school.

### Perpetrator

- Most importantly, the perpetrator should be helped to realise that bullying will not be tolerated, that it must stop immediately and that there can be no re-occurrence.
- Children are helped to reflect upon their actions and to empathise with how the bullied child may feel.
- Children that have shown bullying behaviour are supported to modify their behaviour by the Academy's Anti-bullying Champion – this may be through use of a monitoring card, structured lunchtimes (including pastoral support) and involvement of parents to reinforce the unacceptable nature of bullying.
- Other consequences may take place, such as loss of break time or other 'privileges' in school.
- After incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers of both victim and perpetrator will be kept informed throughout the process.
- Close contact will be maintained with the victim's parents or carers to ensure that the victim adjusts positively back to school life as quickly as possible.
- Parents' views will always be considered but the Academy promotes wherever possible reconciliation in order to provide clear resolution for all concerned, while not condoning the bullying.

### Reconciliation

- The perpetrator will be asked at a suitable point to genuinely apologise, in writing or in person.
- Children will be encouraged to reconcile any issues over a period of time

so that any injustice can be rectified, if appropriate.

## Sanctions

- If the Principal is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The Principal will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. loss of breaktimes and lunchtimes, or internal isolation.
- Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.
- All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.
- The school will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not exclude pupils unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

## Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)
- The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problem.

The Principal will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

## Appendix

### Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Does not want to go on the bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Progress at school slows down
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay someone who has asked them for money)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when an online or mobile phone message is received

These signs and behaviors could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated