



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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This is the Anti-Bullying policy for Aston Community Education Trust
Secondary Academies

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This policy is based on the DfE guidance 'Preventing & Tackling Bullying' July 2017. It also considers other DfE statutory guidance.

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Key Contact Personnel:

- 1) Nominated member of the academy leadership team responsible for the anti-bullying policy
- 2) Designated safeguarding lead(s)
- 3) Named governor with lead responsibility

Introduction

ACET recognises there is a need to safeguard the welfare of all those within the school community and to encourage co-operation, tolerance and harmony.

All children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

At ACET, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and effects everyone. All types of bullying are unacceptable at our academy and will not be tolerated. All students should feel able to tell and when bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken. We are a TELLING academy. This means that anyone who is aware of any type of bullying that is taking place is expected to tell a member of staff immediately.

Students are reminded on a regular basis who they should go too should they wish to speak to someone about an incident of bullying.

Aims and objectives of this policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the academy policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents/carers know what the academy policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

The vast majority of us have encountered bullying at some point in our lives, but we all deal with it differently. The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our academy is a safe place for children and adults to be; whether the school community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.



We also endeavour:

- To emphasise through all aspects of our curriculum that bullying will not be tolerated
- To ensure that there are clear procedures and systems for reporting and recording bullying, which are understood and followed by all staff
- To ensure students and staff learn to keep themselves and others safe
- To ensure that students learn to recognise and respect the differences between groups of people within the school community
- To help students to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and to fulfil their potential within school
- To support and re-educate those students who are both the victims and perpetrators of bullying, providing them with a range of strategies they can use if they are at risk of bullying others or are being bullied themselves
- To develop a school ethos where all members can come together without fear of violence, aggression or intimidation of any kind

Students are taught that any kind of aggressive behaviour, either verbal or physical is unacceptable. Incidents of bullying are always treated seriously.

All academy staff are vigilant to identify actual or potential cases of bullying. Victims are asked not to retaliate, but to inform a member of staff immediately. Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated overtime, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally'. (DfE July 2017). Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, and making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

At ACET bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures)
Physical	Pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments



Bullying related to sexual orientation	Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber bullying	All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat; Twitter/Facebook/Snapchat/Whatsapp misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities, i-pad, games consoles
Prejudicial bullying	Against peoples protected characteristics – race, religion, faith and belief. Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality and culture. Bullying related to a person’s special needs.

Bullying is also recognised in our academies as a form of peer-on-peer abuse.

Bullying may be related to:

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances
- Sexual orientation, sexism, homophobia

Schools must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation in line with Anti-Discrimination Law. (The Equality Act 2010)

Combating bullying

ACET is aware that bullying must be tackled on two levels, by focusing on preventative work, but also by responding appropriately when incidents do occur. We constantly work hard to improve behaviour and encourage children and young people to manage their own behaviour. We teach our students that as well as having rights, the choices they make will also bring responsibilities.



We shall be using the following strategies to ensure that we have a clear, consistent and effective approach to bullying:

- An agreed definition of bullying with a base line measurement, as the beginning of an awareness raising campaign
- A strong ethos in ACET, promoting tolerance and respect for difference and diversity
- Positive leadership from senior staff and governors on tackling bullying
- a designated member of staff from the Senior Management Team, who will be responsible for co-ordinating anti-bullying issues
- A clear anti-bullying policy. The policy will be reviewed regularly by staff, governors, parents/carers and students
- A planned approach in the Personal Development / PSHCE curriculum and tutorial programme to the issue of bullying in a context which promotes self-esteem and confidence in relationships
- Planning and promoting teaching and academy routines which encourage learning and positive behaviour
- Regular training for all staff to raise and maintain awareness, to alert them to indicators which may suggest bullying and to equip them with ways of responding to it
- Periodic consultation with students (via the school council) to inform the academy's knowledge of bullying
- Confidential and varied methods for alerting academy staff to current instances of bullying
- Adequate supervision of the school site, especially toilets, lunch queues and distant areas, including if appropriate, the school gates at the beginning and end of the day
- Increased supervision levels and, as appropriate safe areas, for students who feel threatened at break times
- Independent listeners, including older students and adults, other than school staff, to whom victims of bullying may turn (e.g. post-16 mentors and prefects)
- Encouraging co-operative behaviour
- The use of individual plans for those children experiencing interpersonal and peer relationship difficulties
- Close monitoring of those children with Special Educational Needs
- Sharing proven good practice with colleagues both in ACET and in our community of schools.



Education

Students will be given the opportunity to increase their awareness of both the effects and consequences of bullying through some or all of the following:

- Curriculum areas – English, Drama, RE, Personal Development, PSHE, History, Registration etc
- Assemblies/student council
- Class discussions on issues such as friendship, prejudice, assertiveness, coping strategies
- Firm and appropriate disciplinary procedures
- Students being encouraged to develop their own class/form rules
- Greater interaction between classes/ year groups (through the House System)

Role of the named governor

The named governor will:

- review the Anti-Bullying policy bi-annually
- meet with the named member of SLT prior to each local governing body meeting to discuss reported incidents of bullying, action, support and outcomes. This will be fed back to the LGB, as appropriate
- if possible, be part of the student disciplinary committee where incidents of bullying are being addressed or raise questions and comments via the chair of the panel.
- be part of the discussions if any parent/carer concerns or complaints are raised.

Dealing with bullying incidents/allegations

Where a student reports/alleges a bullying incident to an adult, or an adult witnesses an incident, the following are agreed school procedures:

- a nominated member of staff, e.g. Principal, Assistant Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Vice Principal, Learning Progress Manager, Year Leader, Year Manager is informed (any written evidence will also be presented)
- nominated staff will ensure the immediate safety of all staff, students and property (where necessary)
- any injured child/children or staff will receive appropriate medical attention as soon as is practicable
- all incidents will be recorded, including the facts of the incident, action taken and a report of the follow up interviews
- both the victim(s) and bully(ies) should be interviewed separately to establish the facts without apportioning blame



- parents/carers of the victim(s) and bully(ies) will be contacted
- in the light of the incident it may be appropriate to review existing behaviour policy and/or procedures
- appropriate sanctions and support will be discussed and agreed upon
- follow up discussions will take place within 2-3 weeks
- the opportunity should be available after the incident for both the victim(s) and bully(ies) together to discuss their difficulties with a responsible and confident adult through a Restorative Justice meeting (see addendum)
- if appropriate, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed or other local services including early help and social care
- where the bullying of students takes place off site or outside of normal school hours, the academy will do all it can to support an investigation, collaborating with other schools / agencies, as appropriate

Supporting students

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- providing pastoral support and guidance
- offering them the chance to discuss how they feel with a designated member of staff
- being advised to report any further incidents of bullying immediately
- assistance with re-building self-esteem and confidence
- providing on-going support, if required
- seeking assistance from specialists, where necessary

Students who have perpetrated bullying will be supported by:

- discussing with them the concerns related to their actions and their need to change
- liaising with their parents/carers to support this change
- providing the appropriate education and support regarding the consequences of their behaviour / actions
- if the bullying was online, requesting content to be removed and reporting these accounts



Sanctions

All known / reported incidents of bullying will be thoroughly investigated. This may involve the victim, witnesses and perpetrator being interviewed. Statements will be taken and agreed upon.

It may be enough that the student displaying the unacceptable behaviour discusses the seriousness of their actions, the possible effects of their actions and makes a genuine apology for their behaviour, being reminded that further incidents of bullying will not be tolerated.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Learning Progress Manager/Year Manager to carry out some "Restorative Justice" (RJ) and draw up a "behaviour" contract, signed by all parties, to outline future conduct and behaviours. (Parents/carers will be kept informed at all stages).

Depending on the seriousness of the bullying the student displaying this behaviour may be: -

- Placed on report and their behaviour monitored closely
- Placed in detention for unacceptable behaviour
- Placed in isolation, depending on the severity of the behaviour
- Referred on to other agencies for additional support and work e.g. Behaviour Support Services, Education Psychology Service, Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator
- Engage in work with the academy's police officer. (Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include: violence and assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, hate crimes)
- Appear before the governors' student disciplinary panel

More serious or repeated incidents of bullying may be escalated to fixed term or, in exceptional cases, permanent exclusion.

At all stages students will be encouraged to reconcile and move forward.

Incidents of bullying will be recorded on a student's record on the SIMS behaviour log system. (This should include information about the incident/decisions/actions. These should also be recorded in a central log so that incidents of bullying and procedures can be reviewed regularly).

All of the above is in line with the academy's Behaviours & Rewards Policy.

Any incidents of bullying should continue to be monitored for several weeks, longer if necessary, after any apologies sanctions have been implemented.



We are aware of the need to deal with allegations or incidents of bullying sensitively. We also appreciate the importance of dealing with all the children and young people involved in a way which communicates disapproval where appropriate, but also treats them with dignity.

Working with parents/carers

We will work with parents/carers to minimise the likelihood of further bullying regardless of whether we are talking about the child who has been bullied or the one who has bullied.

We will endeavour to give parents/carers every opportunity to discuss their concerns as soon as practicable. We will emphasise the importance of working together to solve problems and create realistic solutions that are acceptable to all concerned. A lack of parental support can make conflict resolution much more difficult and is regrettable, particularly if children then mirror the negativity and unhelpful attitude they have seen.

ACET appreciates there will be occasions when the parents and carers of one or both sets of students involved will feel the school has not sanctioned appropriately. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to share their concerns and if appropriate, staff will discuss the decisions to impose the particular sanction(s) with them.

Where a parent is dis-satisfied with the academy's handling of a situation then the Principal will seek to resolve the situation informally. In the event of a formal complaint then the agreed complaints procedure for the academy will be initiated.

ACET actively encourages and welcomes comments, questions and suggestions regarding our Anti-Bullying policy. This will be discussed at parent/carer forums, where appropriate.

Addendum

The Restorative Justice Process

Restorative Justice works to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and give them the opportunity to repair it. It offers those who have suffered harm the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged and repair relationships which have broken down and make amends.

Conflict between people happens all the time, but when it occurs, restorative justice can help to 'restore' the balance in a just and fair way. In resolving the harm done it works to prevent it from happening again and breaks down the barriers formed.

- Restorative Justice offers a mediation approach to resolving conflict against all parties because it: -
- Allows all parties the opportunity to participate



- Brings all parties together with an impartial mediator to consider what has happened and attempt to help put it right and encourages responsibility and reintegration

Sometimes in school...

- Students involved in dispute are not required to take responsibility for their behaviour
- Punishments don't provide a way forward in resolving disputes

Restorative Justice, however: -

- Recognises that conflict is a part of our lives
- Allows young people to take responsibility for their feelings and behaviour
- It empowers young people and others to handle conflict in a positive way

Restorative Justice can repair the school as a community

- Restorative Justice is a part of a process that involves the commitment of the whole academy.

Supporting documentation:

- DfE Preventing & Tackling Bullying. July 2017
- Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent & Respond: Guidance for Schools
- Cyberbullying – Childnet's Cyberbullying Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

