



ACET Anti-Bullying Policy (Secondary)

DATE: October 2025

POLICY LEAD: Executive Principal

APPROVED BY: Executive



Excellence



Equity



Empowerment

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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| <p>This policy remains valid until it is reviewed and replaced; it does not expire by date alone. Policies are reviewed annually, or sooner if required by statutory or legislative changes, in line with best practice</p> | | |
| Policy Lead / Author | Executive Principal | |
| Version Number | Date Issued | Updated Information |
| V1 | May 2022 | |
| V2 | September 2024 | <p>Academy values and principles relating to bullying have been highlighted.</p> <p>A definition and statement about bullying linked to 'Generative artificial intelligence' (AI) have been added.</p> <p>Bullying is also recognised in our academies as a form of child-on-child abuse. Term updated from peer or peer to reflect KCSiE 2024</p> <p>Pastoral staff titles updates - Pastoral and Learning Lead, Pastoral Support Manager/Learning Progress Manager is informed (any written evidence will also be presented)</p> <p>Sanction room names updated - The Removal Room / The Bridge,</p> <p>Recommended to signpost the complaints policy - The ACET Complaints Policy can be found on the academy website in the ACET Policies section.</p> <p>Needs on SEND students acknowledged - **Academy staff will always consider the needs of students with SEND. We also acknowledge that students with SEND and significantly more likely to experience bullying.</p> |
| V3 | October 2025 | Included further explanation related to child-on-child abuse. New reference made to - Recording, Monitoring and Analysis of Bullying Incidents of bullying incidents. |
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This is the Anti-Bullying policy for Aston Community Education Trust Secondary Academies

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:

| | Shirebrook Academy | Swinton Academy | Aston Academy |
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| Nominated member of the academy leadership team responsible for the anti-bullying policy | Lindsay Ward | Sarah Rhodes | Stephen Taylor |
| Designated safeguarding lead(s) | DSL - Lindsay Ward DSL - Lindsey Burgin DDSL - Elaine Wainwright DDSL - Damian O'Reilly DDSL – Lauren McKay DDSL - Rob Duroe | DSL Chela Wilson, DDSL Louise Seagrave, DDSL Michelle Marshall | DSL Fran Haywood DDSL James Graham, DDSL Phil Wilson DDSL Tracey Ellis, DDSL Pete Scantlebury, DDSL Sulena Ellinger |
| Named governor with lead responsibility | Sally Wheatley | Claire Hand | Dave Lennox |

Academy values and principles in relation to bullying.

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 is a safeguarding issue. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks and prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare.

Bullying can be:

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| 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, Bi phobic and transphobic |
| Direct or indirect verbal | Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing. |
| Cyber bullying and online safety | 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. |

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| <p>Generative artificial intelligence (AI)</p> | <p>The academy recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.</p> <p>The academy will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying policy.</p> |
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Bullying is also recognised in our academies as a form of child-on-child abuse. We work hard to put in place procedures to minimise the effects of such bullying. These include implementing systems which allow children to confidently report abuse; how allegations will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with; clear processes for supporting victims, perpetrators and other affected children; recognition that abuse may be taking place even if not reported; and a statement making clear there should be a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

All staff understand that even if there are no reports of bullying in their classes or year groups, it does not mean it is not happening. All staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature.

Bullying may also 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)

Preventing bullying

ACET is aware that bullying must be tackled on two levels, by focusing on preventative work through education, 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 also recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others (both online and offline).

We recognise that the following groups may also be at increased risk of bullying:

- Children with SEND
- Children who need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs

- Looked after children and previously looked after children.
- Children who are persistently absent or missing from education
- Children from ethnic minority backgrounds
- LGBTQ+ students
- Young carers
- Students from low-income families
- Students with medical conditions or physical differences
- Students who are new to the academy or country

For these groups, we will:

- Ensure staff are aware of their potential vulnerability.
- Monitor bullying data to identify if these groups are disproportionately affected.
- Provide targeted support and interventions where needed.
- Work closely with parents/carers and external agencies.
- Ensure our curriculum promotes understanding, respect and celebration of diversity.

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 and student leadership group) 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.
- ensure that DSL/DDSLs and wider staff receive the training they need to deal with incidents of bullying effectively.
- 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, Pastoral and Learning Lead, Pastoral Support Manager/Learning Progress 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.

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.

The ACET Complaints Policy can be found on the academy website in the ACET Policies section.

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

Sanctions and Consequences

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.

Our approach to sanctions:

We are committed to a fair, proportionate and consistent approach to sanctions. When determining an appropriate response to bullying, we will consider:

- The severity and frequency of the bullying behaviour
- The impact on the victim(s)
- Whether this is a first incident or part of a pattern of behaviour
- The age and maturity of the students involved.

- Any special educational needs, disabilities, or other vulnerabilities
- Whether there are any safeguarding concerns
- The context and any mitigating circumstances
- Whether the perpetrator shows genuine remorse and understanding of the impact of their actions

Sanctions may include:

For less serious or first-time incidents:

- A discussion with the student about the seriousness of their actions and the possible effects
- Further education
- A genuine apology to the victim (where appropriate and the victim wishes to receive it)
- A behaviour contract outlining future conduct and behaviours, signed by all parties.
- Being placed on report with behaviour monitored closely.
- Detention
- Loss of privileges (e.g., break time activities, school trips)
- Community service within the academy

For more serious or repeated incidents:

- Placement in The Removal Room/The Bridge
- Referral to external agencies for additional support (e.g., Behaviour Support Services, Educational Psychology Service, Learning and Engagement Coordinator)
- Work with the academy's police officer (some forms of bullying are illegal and will be reported to the police, including violence and assault, theft, repeated harassment, or intimidation, and hate crimes)
- Appearance before the governors' student disciplinary panel
- Suspension
- In exceptional cases, permanent exclusion

Restorative approaches:

Where appropriate, we will use restorative justice approaches to help students understand the impact of their behaviour and repair relationships. This may include:

- Facilitated meetings between victim and perpetrator (only where both parties agree and it is deemed safe and appropriate)
- Further education
- Peer mediation

- Restorative conversations (see addendum – The Restorative Justice Process)

All sanctions will be recorded on the academy MIS. (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).

Recording, Monitoring and Analysis of Bullying Incidents

All incidents of bullying will be recorded on the academy MIS. The academy safeguarding lead will analyse bullying data for the LGB reports (x 3 per year) The analysis will look for patterns and trends in bullying behaviour, whether particular groups of students are disproportionately affected (either as victims or perpetrators), hotspots (locations, times of day, or activities where bullying is more likely to occur) and whether any students require additional support

This analysis will inform:

- Staff training needs
- Adjustments to supervision arrangements
- Updates to the Personal Development/PSHE curriculum
- Targeted interventions for individuals or groups
- Updates to this policy and related policies

Confidentiality: All records will be stored securely and in accordance with GDPR and data protection requirements. Access to detailed records will be restricted to relevant staff members on a need-to-know basis.

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 the academy...

- Sanctions do not 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 2025
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.
- ACET Behaviour & Rewards Policy