



ASPIRE

Academies Trust

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Reviewed: Spring 2024

Review Frequency: Annually

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Anti-bullying Policy

'Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, schools can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.' DfE Guidance, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017

Every school must have in place measures to prevent all types of bullying. We have a responsibility for the well-being of all our children. We take this responsibility very seriously and wish to work together with parents and children to ensure that our schools are safe and happy places for everyone.

We also believe that as well as all children being protected, all staff, visitors, parents and carers have the right to be protected from bullying and abusive behaviour.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related Aspire policies, including Behaviour, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Online Safety, Restrictive Physical Interventions, and Low-Level Concerns. Key changes within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, should also be taken into account.

We are committed to:

- Discuss, monitor and review our anti-bullying policy annually, unless otherwise required;
- Support staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately;
- Ensuring that pupils feel safe to learn, and abide by the anti-bullying policy;
- Report back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns and to deal promptly with any issues which arise;
- Seek to learn (and where appropriate implement) from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and to utilise the support of other relevant organisations.

Aims and objectives

- To make Aspire Schools safe and positive places for the whole school community;
- To strive to ensure that all members of the school community are protected from bullying behaviour;
- To increase awareness of bullying, its causes and consequences;
- To ensure that there is a consistent, constructive and fair response to any bullying incident;
- To make procedures for dealing with bullying very clear, so that all members of the school community know what they can expect from the school, and what the school expects of them.

What is bullying?

"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 (e.g. cyber-bullying via text messages social media or gaming which can include images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. " (DfE 2017).

Bullying can be defined in three ways:

- It is **intentionally hurtful** and take the form of physical, emotional or mental pain;
- It is a **repeated and sustained experience**, rather than an isolated incident;
- It involves an **imbalance of power** between the person being bullied and the person bullying

Examples:

Direct Bullying:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, spitting, unwanted physical contact, damaging belongings, stealing
- **Verbal** – name calling, insults, put-downs, including bullying by online and text message, use of hate websites, anonymous notes

Indirect Bullying:

- **Spreading rumours**, getting others to be unkind as well
- **Graffiti**
- **Psychological** – e.g. excluding someone from a group, intimidation, threats, sending hurtful texts, messages or photographs.

Cyber Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Principal, that data or files may be deleted, where there is good reason to do so and at the discretion of the Principal. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. All concerns of this kind will, however, be brought to the attention of the parents at the earliest possible opportunity.

Bullying Off Site

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. We would do so in close communication with a child's parent / carers.

Equal Opportunities

We believe it is the right of every child, regardless of race, gender, special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and reassignment, to have access to high quality learning experiences in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

We are strongly committed to positive action to remove and challenge discrimination and stereotyping in all aspects of the school and its work.

Who could be bullied?

Bullying can happen to all children and young people and it can affect their social, mental, emotional health and have a detrimental effect on their well-being. Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may be severely affected by it, such as those with special educational needs or disabilities. Others may be particularly vulnerable because they are going through a personal or family crisis, or suffering from a health problem. There will be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others. We need to be aware of this to develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening.

We strive:

- To make it clear to all members of the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable;
- For everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as a victim or observer;
- To ensure that all reported incidents are followed up;
- To establish facts clearly, taking separate accounts from victims, bullies and witnesses;

- To offer support to victims;
- To confront bullies with the seriousness of the offence and to offer support to help them readjust their behaviour;
- To seek parental/carer and peer group support and co-operation at all times.

Protected characteristics

We promote inclusion and the need to respect diversity in all of our schools.

Within our trust, prejudice and hatred is not accepted; we have a zero tolerance approach to isolated incidents or repeated incidents that would be classed as bullying. This includes incidents deemed to be homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, racist, targeted at faith, sexist and disablist. Our commitment to the 'No Outsiders' approach throughout our trust drives and develops a culture of acceptance and whereby diversity is respected by all members of each schools community.

To determine if a prejudicial incident is bullying, it is important to have a shared whole-school understanding of what bullying is, as outlined above. This includes providing staff with training and establishing a culture of vigilance and zero tolerance.

The following address bullying:

Equality Act 2010

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Children Act 2004

Education Act 2002

Human Rights Act 2008

Education Regulations 2014

The Equality Act places a duty on schools covering the 'protected characteristics'. The Aspire Equality and Diversity Policy includes greater detail and each school has a bespoke action plan to complement this.

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Principals, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, must identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others, and self-discipline among pupils, and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of bullying around race, religion and culture.

Racist incidents and racist bullying are taken extremely seriously and are addressed and recorded in the same way as all bullying incidents, as detailed in this policy. We will seek external help, support and advice, where required and will consider the need for police involvement, if and when appropriate.

The Role of All Staff

It should be noted that hurtful behaviour is not always considered bullying, but all reported hurtful behaviour should be taken seriously and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

All staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.

- Teachers will talk with their classes about bullying and what they should do as an individual if they are bullied, or are witness to or are aware of any bullying;
- Teachers work with the children to help them to distinguish between one off instances of hurtful or unkind behaviour and bullying.
- Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc., within the formal curriculum, including a range of PSHE schemes of work, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to develop the self-awareness and self-regulation required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Staff find

opportunities to praise and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.

- Teachers keep records of incidents that happen in their class, and that they are aware of in the school;
- Whole school assemblies raise awareness and promote anti bullying;
- If an incident of bullying occurs, all those involved will be spoken to by the teacher, other key adults, or senior staff.
- The victim will be offered support, guidance and comfort;
- Facts will be established as clearly as possible and the bully made aware of the seriousness of their behaviour. The bully will be told the consequences of their actions, in line with the Behaviour Policy. Parents/carers will be informed;
- The incident will be logged;
- If the bullying persists, the Principal will inform the Governors and further consequences, including suspension, will be considered.
- School behavior records enable staff to analyse individual events, as well to spot possible patterns and trends needing intervention.

How we address bullying

- Bullying is taken seriously and the Behaviour Policy is used, and procedures followed, as for all inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff support the child who is being bullied to help them feel safe and find responses to bullying that work.
- Staff will work with the child who is bullying, in order to support changes to their behaviour. It is our aim to repair damaged or broken relationships, while recognising that this is not always possible.
- Staff will seek to work with the parents/carers of any child who is being bullied to support and encourage that child in finding solutions to the bullying.
- Staff will seek to work with the parents/carers of any child who is bullying to support and encourage that child to find positive alternatives to the bullying behaviour.
- Where necessary, staff will seek to involve the support of outside agencies in supporting children who are experiencing bullying, or who are bullying.

This Trust and each school is committed to stopping bullying behaviour and to do this we need the full support and commitment of the whole school community.

The Role of Pupils

- Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they should keep on letting people know.
- Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying.
- Pupils are encouraged to follow our school rules and positive behaviour is recognised and celebrated within school.
- Pupils are encouraged to share their worries and concerns with a trusted adult.
- As part of the school community children have a responsibility to help combat bullying by following their school's rules and expectations.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have an important role to play in helping the school to deal with bullying and have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school. Parents should:

- Discourage children from using bullying behaviour at home, school, or elsewhere
- Take an active interest in your child's school life
- Contact the class teacher if their child may be being bullied, or you suspect may be bullying others

- Monitor your child's access to and use of the internet and mobile technology
- Avoid taking matters into their own hands by trying to resolve issues 'out of school'

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. The matter would then be investigated by the class teacher in the first instance and by a member of SLT as necessary.

The Role of Governors

The Local Advisory Board (LAB) supports the Principal and all staff in their attempts to eliminate bullying. The governors will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The governors monitor incidents of bullying that do occur through information received in the termly Principal's report, and review the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the Principal to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident should follow the informal stages of the complaints policy. Beyond this, a formal complaint can be made and the process would then be adhered to.

The Role of the Trust

The Trust will support schools and staff with dealing with bullying through on-going CPD, including STEPs and THRIVE. The Trust will oversee the implementation of this policy, as well as details of bullying incidents across all schools, through the Principals' reports.

The Trust will respond to any complaints from parents/carers, in line with the Complaints Policy.

Monitoring and Review:

The Principal is responsible for monitoring the day to day effectiveness of this policy. Governors monitor the effectiveness through a review of bullying incidents.

All schools use CPOMs to record bullying and/or racist incidents, so detailed records will be found there, often in the place of paper copies. Through use of CPOMS schools will monitor, review and record bullying incidents. In this way, individual incidents can be addressed and followed up effectively, and overall trends and patterns can be audited and acted upon, as required.

This policy works in conjunction with our Behaviour policy and Restrictive Physical Intervention policy.

Support for Staff

It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils. But it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. Aspire Academies Trust does not tolerate such behavior, takes matters of this nature very seriously and will apply all appropriate policies robustly.