

Anti-Bullying Policy

2023/2024

PARTNERSHIPS | OPPORTUNITY | INTEGRITY | EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | PEOPLE-CENTRED

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Our Vision Statement

At Washington Academy, we believe the key principle to everything we do in school is to create excellent, mutually positive relationships between all within our community. Where students, staff, parents and other members of our school community feel safe and confident.

Our Aims

At Washington Academy we take all forms of conflict, friendship problems, and bullying behaviour seriously.

Our aims are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for all children in our care.
- To create a happy atmosphere in which students, parents and staff work together for the welfare of the students.
- Everyone is mutually valued and respected regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, beliefs or ability.
- To encourage children to adopt values in order to develop a sense of self-discipline and to take responsibility for their own actions for themselves now and throughout their lives.
- To introduce a behavioural approach to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment is not tolerated.

Roles and Responsibilities

There are a number of roles and responsibilities to ensure effective management of peer related issues and bullying across the Academy.

Headteacher and Senior Leaders – Overall responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of all pupils within the Academy. Challenge and support others to complete their role. Oversight of peer related issues and incidence of bullying across all year groups and hold staff to account to deal with all incidents between peers in an efficient and supportive way.

Assistant Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead – Report to the Headteacher and other Senior Leaders on patterns of peer related incident, tracking and monitoring of those displaying bullying type behaviours and identifying those who experience multiple challenging experiences within school with their peers. Work with other anti-bullying professionals to identify and implement anti-bullying strategies across the whole school. Evaluate the success of strategies used. Lead a team of student anti-bullying leaders and peer pals to support the student body.

Director of Personal Development – Coordinate whole school events with an anti-bullying focus. A source of expert advice to assist other staff in tackling peer on peer incidents and bullying.

Heads of Year and Pastoral Staff – To keep up to date with all peer-on-peer incidence within their year group. Investigate incidents in a balanced and objective way. Ensure that mediation and a restorative approach is at the heart of dealing with all peer-on-peer related incidents and bullying. Feedback to all involved with incidents including alleged victims, alleged perpetrators and parent/carers of all involved.

All staff – It is the responsibility of all staff within the Academy to be vigilant of peer-on-peer incidence and bullying. To recognise any behaviour of concerns and report these through school reporting systems. It is the responsibility of all staff to record any incident between peers that is reported to them by either parent or child.

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant, but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both children disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both children make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is defined as - **“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can happen face to face or through cyber space”** (Anti-bullying Alliance 2014).

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying or when children with disabilities are involved. If the person being bullied might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

Bullying can take many forms:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, using threatening gestures.
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, inappropriate touching or any use of violence.
- Racist: using racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Gender and sexual: making unwanted physical contact or homophobic or sexually abusive comments because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, making sexual or derogatory comments.
- Disability related: name-calling, using gestures, tormenting, threatening, because of, or focussing on, the issue of disability or special need.
- Cyber: all areas of Internet, such as email and Internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by messaging applications.

Some bullying is done because a child is deemed to belong to a certain group. This has been labelled 'prejudice based bullying', and includes homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sexual or gender bullying, and bullying of students with learning or other disabilities. This form of prejudice includes the use of words or phrases that have negative connotations relating to race, ability, sexuality or gender, regardless of intention to offend.

Common characteristics of bullying.

There are common characteristics which are found in acts of bullying. These are:

- Intention to harm: bullying is deliberate, with the intention to cause harm. For example, friends teasing each other in a 'good-natured' way is not bullying, but having your bag and other possessions taken and thrown around or a person teasing another with the intention to deliberately upset them is bullying.
- Harmful outcome: one or more persons are hurt physically or emotionally.
- Direct or indirect acts: bullying can involve direct aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours or being ignored and left out or being given dirty looks every time you walk past.
- Repetition: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying.
- Unequal power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, or psychological resilience.

Although bullying is not a criminal offence, there are some types of harassment or threatening behaviour or communication that could be. For example, under the Protection from Harassment Act, Malicious Communications Act 1988, Communications Act 2001 and the Public Order Act 1986. Discrimination and prejudice-based bullying can be:

- Racist
- Homophobic
- Transphobic
- Discrimination to SEN, disability or personal health
- Sexist
- Sexual
- Related to personal appearance or culture
- Related to home circumstances.

It is very important to remember that bullying is NOT the odd occasion of falling out with others, name-calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if this is done over a sustained period of time with the intention to cause upset. Bullying is always taken seriously because of the potential impact upon young people. Many outward signs of bullying can be the same as other indicators of abuse such as non-accidental injuries, self-abuse, low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety. If unchecked, others may come to see bullying behaviour as acceptable within the school. Victims can become bullies of younger or more vulnerable pupils. Bullying can have long term effects on people being bullied which may stretch into their adult lives.

Sexually Harmful Behaviour

As an Academy it is our commitment to create an environment where sexually harmful behaviours and harassment are not tolerated. In our aim to create this culture staff in school will use the Brook traffic light tool 'A guide to identifying sexual behaviours'. The tool will be used to identify, support and assist in deciding onward actions of staff in relation to sexually harmful behaviours. This includes work for the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator. Where appropriate, Washington

Academy will make onward referrals to appropriate agencies including together for children sex and relationship education service, Brook are an agency who work with children in both one to one and group setting to tackle sexually harmful behaviours, together for children – children services and police in line with the Academies Safeguarding procedures.

Who is bullied?

Anybody could be subject to bullying at any time in their life. It is not only something that affects children.

A person is bullied when, either as an individual or part of a group, they suffer in any way from the direct result of intentional and persistent harassment and/or victimisation by another individual or group.

A person who has been bullied may commonly find it difficult to combat victim behaviour or report their experiences to those who may be able to help them.

Children and young people who are at most increased risk of being the victims or perpetrators of bullying are those who:

- are in foster care or residential homes (looked after children)
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- have specific special educational needs.
- have a disability or impairment.
- are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- are refugees or asylum seekers.
- start a school or activity group mid-term.
- are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning of their sexuality or gender.
- speak a first language other than English.
- are young carers.
- have suffered bereavement.
- have suffered domestic violence.
- have experienced physical or emotional trauma.
- have a parent that was a victim of bullying.

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.
- Begs to be driven to school.
- Changes their usual routine e.g. is unwilling to go to school (school phobic).
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering.
- Attempts or threatens self-harm.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting.
- Regularly feels ill in the morning.
- Begins to do poorly in school work.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions go “missing”.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Becomes unreasonable when dealing with school issues.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Whole school approach

- Issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour are taught healthy relationships through personal development. Children are taught to explore some of the ups and downs of relationships, including the positive aspects and benefits of friendships and the negative aspects of relational conflict.
- Whole School Assemblies are also used to discuss bullying and raise children’s awareness of what bullying looks like, and how they can respond.

- Student Leadership and School Council will provide a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the children to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- Anti-bullying Ambassadors and Peer mentors support students to resolve friendship problems and low-level bullying behaviour without adult intervention.
- The school core value of mutual respect to all will be upheld at all times.
- All staff will monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes inappropriate in order to prevent bullying to develop. Staff will report all peer related incidents.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week each year
- Regular staff inset session on anti-bullying strategies and safeguarding procedures.

Personal Development

Pupil's personal development will be developed when learning about bullying by ensuring pupils:

- Respect each other including people from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Develop an understanding of what a Healthy Relationship is.
- Recognise the difference between right and wrong.
- Understand the consequences of their actions.
- Understand the effects of their behaviour on others.

Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour

Children are encouraged to report any negative behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their teacher/TA or any member of support staff.
- Speaking to a parent/other adult who then may contact the school in any of the ways listed.
- Speaking to their School Council rep or a anti-bullying ambassador.

When bullying is known to have happened or be ongoing

The Head of Year will discuss the incident(s) with the child alleging a peer related incident. It is important that they are listened to and feel their voice is heard.

An investigation will be carried out by pastoral staff and will be discussed with the child accused of wrongdoing or bullying behaviours. Information will be gathered from witnesses to explain what they saw. The class tutor/Head of Year/Headteacher will be informed.

Sanctions in line with the restorative approach to behaviour:

- Parental contact.
- Restorative Justice Conversation.
- Internal reflection period of time.
- Involvement of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.
- Exclusion from social times within the Academy.
- Fixed-term exclusion for significant and repeated incident.
- Permanent exclusion.

Where a child or group of children deny involvement in bullying behaviour the children concerned will be observed and monitored. The child being bullied may be asked to record and report any incidents which cause them concern.

This policy will refer to 'the person bullying' and 'the person being bullied' rather than 'bully' and 'victim', both of which can be defined as negative labelling.

Support

The person being bullied.

Support for the person being bullied is essential both immediately following the incident and during an agreed period of review. Peer support, staff support, parental support and outside agency support may all be essential to ensure that the person being bullied does not suffer any long-term effects.

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassuring the pupil.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Emotional Resilience sessions.
- Key adult within school.

The person bullying.

It is recognised that support must be given to the person bullying. Disciplinary procedures against the person bullying are one strand of support however further strategies should be used to support positive behaviour modification. Such support may include:

- Reflection.
- Key adult report for positive behaviour report.
- Emotional resilience.
- Behaviour intervention program.
- School counselling.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All incidents of peer related incidents will be recorded on the CPOMS pastoral reporting system. Each incident reported will be reported in the Operational Senior Leadership Team meeting to track and plan for new and emerging issues.

Repeated incidents are identified through the use of CPOMS and further support identified.

Systems are evaluated regularly and further monitored and challenged by Local Academy Board (LAB) members.

Data protection and Safeguarding

Confidentiality

Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidential and that their best interests will be maintained.

Dissemination of the Policy

All staff members and LAB Members will receive a copy of this policy. Copies are available from the office on request.

Suspected Abuse

All incidence of suspected abuse will be investigated and dealt with in line with Washington Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Complaints

If a parent/carer or member of staff is unhappy with the way in which a peer related or bullying incident has been dealt with by Washington Academy staff, they should in the first incidence speak directly with the child's Head of Year. If still unsatisfied parent/carers should request to speak with the Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding, Miss L Parkin or the Director of Personal Development, Mrs K Oakland. If there continues to be concerns, the Washington Academy complaints procedure should be used in all incidences where a parent/carer child is not satisfied with the Academies response to peer related incident or bullying incident.