Students' Anti-Bullying Policy

The Axholme Academy

February 2023

Review: Spring 2026

1. Objectives of this policy

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. It is often characterised by a sustained imbalance of power.

1.1. Objectives:

- To help governors, staff and students understand what constitutes bullying.
- To reaffirm and clarify the Academy's procedure for dealing with and reporting bullying.
- To clearly set out the roles to be played by governors, parents, staff and students in tackling bullying issues if they arise.
- Whenever bullying is witnessed, it will be reported and action will be taken.
- Whenever bullying is suspected, it will be investigated.

2. Introduction

2.1. At The Axholme Academy, we strive to ensure that students and staff can work in a safe and nurturing environment free from prejudice, discrimination and harassment. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues could manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse.

2.2. The DFE document for *Preventing and Tackling Bullying in Schools 2017* states that *'*Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying'. Our Academy does not accept any form of bullying and will address any concerns raised by members of the school community. All forms of bullying are contrary to the values and principles that we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment at the same time as having a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. Standing up to bullying is everyone's responsibility.

2.3 All staff are aware of systems within the Academy which support safeguarding. These include the Ready to Learn Behaviour policy and the Students' Anti-Bullying Policy which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. (KCSIE 2022)

3. Types of bullying

3.1. Bullying can also be categorised as a sustained imbalance of power in relation to examples of 'child on child abuse' (KCSIE 2022), and may include:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm,
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

3.2 Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying includes **sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else**. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Most cyberbullying is unlawful or criminal behavior. Students should never respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Students or parents should report incidents appropriately to their Head of Year and the Police. (Cyber Bullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff, DFE 2014)

3.3 Prejudicial or Discriminatory Bullying

Some bullying relates to students' gender, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. This is taken incredibly seriously by the Academy which protects all of its students from prejudice both through education around intolerance and through severity of sanction. The Academy records and reports such prejudicial or discriminatory bullying and responds both to instances and trends.

3.4 Serious Violence

All staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation. (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022)

4. Key steps in the process

4.1. Students

Any alleged, suspected or witnessed acts of bullying should be reported to a member of staff in the first instance. Tutors or Heads of Year are in the best position to respond, manage, resolve and monitor bullying concerns.

The Academy is victim led in its approach to bullying and will listen to those reporting bullying individually taking into account their views and feelings in each response.

Any identified students found to be bullying others may be provided with an opportunity to restore the damage that they have caused, addressing the impact of their negative behaviour and addressing some of the potential causes of their behaviour.

4.2. Staff

If a member of staff picks up/ suspects an incident of bullying they will log R2+ and complete a statement which is passed to the relevant Head of Year in the school. Pastoral team will talk to the victim and any other students involved (including any witnesses) Any serious or immediate concerns (e.g. where a child's immediate safety is in question) needs to be reported to the DSL / DDSL through the publicised procedure.

General concerns will be flagged with the student's tutor, along with ongoing pastoral support for victims. Tutor/ Head of Year will inform parents if their child has been a victim of bullying or has been involved in the act of bullying. Head of Year / Senior Leaders will issue any necessary and appropriate sanctions - these will typically be R3 or R4 sanctions and will give students guilty of bullying the opportunity to reflect on their actions or meet with their victim restoratively if this is desired by the victim. In some cases the police will be involved - in all cases of illegal cyber bullying the parents and students will be encouraged to contact the police.

4.3. Parents

Any parent or carer concerned that their child is experiencing bullying should report it to the school so that the matter can be investigated and dealt with in line with this policy.
Signs that a child may be experiencing bullying can include:

- being frightened of walking to or from school
- changing their usual routine, i.e. unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- truancy & absence from school
- becoming withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- attempting or threatening suicide
- running away / missing
- crying / disturbed sleep
- damaged possessions / clothing
- asking for money or stealing money
- unexplained cuts or bruises
- changes in behaviour – becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- bullying other children or siblings
- changes in eating habits
- afraid to say what is wrong
- afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- avoiding eye contact

5. Recording

The Axholme Academy records and reports each instance of bullying including cyber bullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying. Trends are examined and responded to through the CS Studies curriculum, Tutor Time and Assembly Programme.

6. Prevention

Our community will work together to eradicate bullying in all of its forms at The Axholme Academy. Much bullying emerges due to misconceptions, stereotypes and damaging views; we have a responsibility to educate our students and staff about acceptance and diversity.

The Axholme Academy will strive to celebrate diversity and individuality and to educate students to encourage acceptance. We will deliver resources for tutor times, PSHE and assemblies that address bullying in all forms. Bullying will remain an on-going discussion within the school and wider community and all recorded incidents will be carefully monitored by Heads of Year. Through our dedication to continuous professional development of staff we can help to ensure that bullying incidents are noticed, reported and dealt with appropriately and swiftly.

The Academy will signpost with clarity the key staff responsible and the route to securing support with bullying and listen without prejudice to the accounts of those who feel distressed.

Our response to bullying is victim led and restorative. We seek not simply to sanction to prevent recurrence but also to educate and repair harm. The conversation between Heads of Year, parents and victims is an essential part of that process and outcomes must be carefully considered. In many cases, the victim may benefit from consensual restorative justice meetings with the bully and a trained member of staff. In others, no contact between both parties may be mandatory for a predetermined period of time.

Any continuation of specific bullying serves naturally to exacerbate and the Academy's response will procedurally escalate to if necessary consider permanent exclusion.

6. References

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069987/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

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