



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Anti-Bullying Policy

July 2023

Document Details

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Change Record

Version	Date	Description
2.1	July 2022	New stand-alone policy (was formerly included in Behaviour Policy.)
2.2	July 2023	Annual Review – change of personnel

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Anti-bullying Policy

Aims and objectives:

Our goal is to have a Bully Free School. This policy aims to provide a framework to help achieve this. It is written in accordance with the DfE guidance **Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies – July 2017**. Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies (Guidance)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Students at Sandwell Academy need to feel safe, secure and valued, so that they can maximise their potential and get the best possible start to their lives from their time at the Academy. However, we are realistic and appreciate that there is always the possibility of bullying occurring within the Academy and outside of the Academy.

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 (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on 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. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – humiliating someone, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, tripping up, spitting, punching or any use of violence

- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, comments about appearance/physique
- Cyber – all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.
- Disability/SEN – because of, or focusing on a disability or special educational need.
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

It may also be bullying when:

- The same person or group always leaves someone out or shuns them
- Someone make threats of physical violence against someone else
- Someone damages someone else's kit or clothing deliberately
- Someone takes someone else's belongings deliberately
- Someone tries to force another to do something they do not want to do
- Someone tries to force another to do something sexual they do not want to do

Consideration of Bullying

Although all of the actions above are serious and adults should always intervene, they may not always be regarded as bullying unless they are part of an on-going pattern of behaviour against the victim.

Also during their time at the Academy, students may have disagreements with their peers and experience breakdowns in friendship groups. In these situations students can feel upset and hurt. However, we would not consider this bullying in and of itself. In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must include:

An imbalance of power: Students who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

Repetition: Bullying behaviours that happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Procedures to follow:

It is vitally important that any incidents of bullying be notified immediately to the **Personal Tutor** or other relevant members of staff as indicated in the **Student and Parent Charters**.

In the first instance it is not a requirement for staff to investigate whether bullying is occurring but rather accept the student's perception and jointly agree a way to go forward with them, which will reduce and ultimately eliminate their difficulties.

All students will be periodically reminded that if they ever feel that appropriate action is not being taken to resolve the problem, they can have immediate access to the Head.

Whose responsibility is it to report bullying?

- The victim
- Other students
- Parents
- Staff

Sometimes, the victim may find it difficult to report the matter. Other people i.e. other students and parents have a responsibility to see that the matter is raised and dealt with appropriately. We all need to look out for each other.

What action will be taken?

The priority is to safeguard the victim and other students and totally remove any possibility of repeat. All action taken must be **consistent, prompt** and in line with the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Personal Tutor, Pastoral Manager and Head of Year
- The appropriate person will interview all concerned and will record the incident using a consistent form and within a confidential bullying incident log.
- Records of incidents will be kept within the student's pastoral file(s) for the duration of the student's attendance at the Academy and therefore subject to the same guidelines for access and confidentiality.
- Personal tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the personal tutor should advise the appropriate subject teachers.
- Parents/carers of students involved will be kept informed.
- Other agencies such as the police, transport companies or other schools may need to be informed if bullying occurs outside of the Academy.

Students who **have been bullied** will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their personal tutor or member of staff of their choice

- reassuring the pupil
- offering continuous support (this could include a mentor or counsellor)
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- follow-up (two weeks after the incident, and the following half term)

Students who **have bullied** will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the student became involved
- establishing the wrongdoing and need to change
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the student

Sanctions for incidents of bullying:

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending
- community involvement in school
- removal of privileges/activities
- after school sanction
- exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- removal of access to social areas
- referral to senior staff and/or external agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Police Liaison Officer.
- internal fixed term exclusion (Internal Intervention Centre)
- minor fixed-term suspension
- major fixed-term suspension
- permanent exclusion

In the event of not being able to secure the victim's safety with an offender or if any one incident is particularly serious in the judgement of the Headteacher, the Bully will be excluded from the Academy using the normal procedures for exclusion (Ref: Behaviour Policy).

Prevention

As a school we take bullying seriously. We use a range of proactive strategies to prevent bullying. These include;

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities to raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PHSE, personal tutor time and subject areas where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.

- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year
- Assemblies.
- Academy Broadcast
- Student questionnaires.
- Poster campaigns.
- Improved supervision in potential problem areas.
- Peer mentoring and Buddy Schemes.
- Assertiveness training.
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

Intervention techniques: Role of Tutors, Parents and Management

Bullying should be a regular topic of discussion within the personal tutor group. Personal tutors should encourage discussions about bullying emphasising the Academy's views about nil tolerance.

Students should be encouraged to look out for each other and be prepared to report any concerns to a teacher, supervisor or Deputy Head. Every student should be reminded that the Headteacher is available to support them if they feel the matter has not been dealt with properly or the bullying will not stop.

Parents also have an important role to play and are strongly advised (through the Parents' Charter) to report any concerns over bullying, however small.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Data from incidents and feedback from all parties will be used to monitor, evaluate and ultimately review this policy annually.

By doing this we anticipate:

- Staff to be more vigilant and responsive to bullying.
- Fewer student reports of incidents of bullying.
- Fewer student reports of being involved in bullying.
- Increased number of students claiming they would not join in bullying others.
- Increased number of students claiming they would tell a member of staff if they felt they were being bullied.

Key Staff responsible

Progress and review of this policy will be maintained by the designated Deputy Head for Behaviour. This review will be carried out in consultation with the remainder of the Senior team, a selection of tutors and student representation.

Date for next review

This policy will be reviewed at the end of each academic year for implementation the following September.

Following appropriate consultation, nothing contained in these policies shall prevent the Headteacher and the Chairman of Governors jointly agreeing in exceptional circumstances some alternative sanction or sanctions, or other measure which, in any particular case, is thought to provide a more effective resolution of the problem concerned.