SANDWELL ACADEMY

Anti-Bullying Policy

July 2026

Document Details

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Category:	Academy
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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
2.3	July 2025	Annual Review – update of wording, change of personnel, renaming of Pastoral Team to Welfare Team
2.4	July 2026	Update of wording

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1. Aims and Objectives

At Sandwell Academy, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where all students feel valued and supported. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Every member of our school community has the right to work and learn in a secure environment, free from intimidation or harm.

Our aim is to become a bully-free school — a place where kindness, respect, and empathy are embedded in everything we do. While we are realistic and appreciate that there is always the possibility of bullying occurring within the Academy and outside of the Academy, we are however proactive in our approach and committed to identifying and addressing any concerns swiftly and effectively. We believe that through education, clear expectations, and a united school community, we can minimise bullying and ensure that every student feels safe and supported.

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**.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated, intentional behaviour that hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally. It can take many forms, including:

- 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.

Bullying can be based on any aspect of an individual's identity, including (but not limited to) race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or appearance.

Bullying is, often:

- 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.

3. Consideration of Bullying

We recognise that not all conflict between students amounts to bullying. Children and young people may fall out, disagree, or display poor behaviour without it meeting the threshold of bullying. As a school, we use professional judgement to assess each situation carefully and fairly, considering:

- The **intent** behind the behaviour
- Whether the actions are **repeated or persistent**
- The **impact** on the individual being targeted
- Any **power imbalance**, whether real or perceived
- The **context**, including age, maturity, and past behaviour of those involved

Our priority is always to ensure that all students feel safe and supported. If a situation does not meet the definition of bullying but still causes harm or distress, it will still be addressed through our behaviour policy or pastoral systems. We will always involve the appropriate staff to ensure the right response is given.

4. Procedures to follow

All students, staff, and parents are encouraged to report concerns about bullying as early as possible. 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.

Reports can be made:

- Directly to any trusted adult (teachers, tutors, Heads of Year, safeguarding leads).
- By parents or carers contacting the school via phone or email.
- Staff to the Welfare Team or students Head of Year

We take all reports seriously and investigate each one promptly and fairly.

While an investigation is underway, we will ensure the student who made the report feels supported and safe. This may include regular check-ins from a trusted adult, adjustments to groupings or seating plans, or temporary separation from the alleged perpetrator if needed. We recognise that it takes courage to speak up, and we are committed to protecting those who do.

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.

5. 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.

When bullying is identified:

- The incident will be investigated as per the Academy Investigation Procedure and Protocol
- Support will be provided to the student being bullied, including access to pastoral care.
- The student responsible for the bullying will be held accountable, and appropriate consequences will be issued in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Restorative work will be undertaken where appropriate to rebuild relationships and promote understanding.
- Parents/carers of all involved parties will be informed.
- Personal tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the personal tutor should advise the appropriate subject teachers.
- 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.
- Other agencies such as the police, transport companies or other schools may need to be informed if bullying occurs outside of the Academy.

Repeated or serious incidents may lead to more significant sanctions, including fixed-term or permanent exclusion.

6. Consequences for incidents of bullying

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending
- removal of privileges/activities
- conduct review
- 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.
- time in the Academy Reflection Hub
- Internal Exclusion (IE)
- Fixed-term suspension (FTS)
- 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 outlined in the Academy Behaviour Policy and Exclusions Policy. Both can be found on the Academy website: Useful Documents & Policies - Sandwell Academy

7. 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.
- Staff training to ensure all adults are vigilant, consistent, and confident in addressing bullying.
- Academy Broadcast, regular assemblies, delivery of the Welfare Curriculum, and tutor time discussions about respectful behaviour and the impact of bullying.
- 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.
- Student Voice.
- Student leadership and peer mentor initiatives to support a culture of respect and reporting.

8. Intervention: 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 their Personal Tutor, Head of Year or Welfare Team. 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 and carers also have an important role to play and are strongly advised (through the Parents' Charter) to report any concerns over bullying, however small.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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 case, is thought to provide a more effective resolution of the problem concerned.