

DUDLEY ACADEMIES TRUST

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introduction

Dudley Academies Trust is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our learners, so that they can learn in a secure and enclosed atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our academies. If bullying does occur, all learners should feel able to tell staff and should be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy and provision rests with the Principal. On an operational basis, the management, responsibility and evaluation of this policy is undertaken by the Assistant Principal.

It is important to note that all staff have a responsibility for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented and to take any suspicion or disclosure of bullying seriously, no matter what the details or provenance, and should respond immediately. In situations not covered by this policy, staff must act in the best interests of the learner, as any responsible parent would act.

Objectives of This Policy

All Trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff should have an understanding of what bullying is.

- All trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the trust policy on bullying is and should follow this when bullying is reported.
- All learners and their parents/carers should be aware of the trust's anti-bullying policy and what they should do if bullying arises.
- All learners and their parents/carers should be assured that our academies take bullying seriously and that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- All learners in each academy should feel able to tell a member of staff when they have experienced or seen bullying, knowing that the actions taken will not only be prompt but sensitive to their concerns.
- All outside agencies, such as the police, social services and health professionals are consulted and their help enlisted where and when appropriate.

As part of their academy induction or professional development, all academy staff will participate in high-quality training to enable each person to consistently apply the knowledge, principles and processes outlined in this policy.

The academy is a member of the Dudley Academies Trust. It will work closely with our other academies and with members of the trusts core team and other personnel to ensure that this policy is fully implemented. The academy has clear aims for its Anti-Bullying Policy:

- To create an environment where bullying is not tolerated, where every learner is recognised, welcomed and valued
- To ensure that all learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities and know how to seek help if those rights are infringed
- To encourage learners to work collaboratively together, develop positive relationships and offer each other mutual support and respect

- To encourage learners to act respectfully and considerately at all times
- To raise awareness and provide learners with the skills, knowledge and confidence to deal effectively with all instances of bullying, through a co-ordinated programme involving PSHCE, collective worship and assemblies, pastoral support and peer mentoring approaches
- To use the processes around [Restorative Justice](#)
- To review and monitor the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policy on an annual basis

Bullying, in whatever form, detrimentally affects the ability of learners to achieve and progress to the best of their ability, their well-being and will not be tolerated in any form, or to any degree.

This policy reflects the aims and policies of the DfE reflected in, ‘Don’t Suffer in Silence’, an anti-bullying pack for schools. This complies with the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and [Race Relations \(Amendment\) Act 2000](#) and ‘[Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying work in Schools](#)’ (2007).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE guidance Tackling bullying of learners with SEN and disabilities - Guidance for schools on tackling bullying involving learners with SEN and disabilities published in May 2008. This can be found at:

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

We will work hard to ensure that bullying plays no part in our community by proactively working with all learners, their families and our staff to eradicate it and promptly dealing with all reported incidents.

This policy will provide clear guidance for staff on dealing with bullying incidents and the process by which the academy will seek to eradicate this issue.

Related Policies

This policy complies with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and is part of a suite of academy policies which should also be referred to:

- Learner Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safer Recruitment and Procedures Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding Learners and Promoting Learner’s Welfare

What is Bullying?

Bullying manifests itself in a number of ways. It is unwanted, aggressive behaviour and the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time and can take many forms:

Emotional:	Being unfriendly, excluding from peer groups, and tormenting i.e. hiding possessions.
Physical:	Pushing, kicking, hitting, making mean or rude hand gestures, other kinds of violence.
Racist:	Racial; taunts, graffiti, gestures, name calling.
Sexual:	Sexual harassment (unwanted physical contact), sexual abuse/demeaning comments.
Homophobic:	Because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
Verbal:	Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threatening, intimidating.
Non-Verbal:	Laughing at someone as a group.
Cyber:	All inappropriate use of the internet or other forms of communication technology i.e. phones to send threatening messages, spread rumours, name calling etc.

The issue of Cyber Bullying in schools may be dealt with by each school working in partnership and incorporating in the policy the below offence:

Section 127 Improper use of public electronic communications network.

A person is guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, he:

- a) sends by means of a public electronic communications network, a message that he knows to be false,
- b) causes such a message to be sent; or
- c) persistently makes use of a public electronic communications network.

This allows the school to manage:

- the offence with an agreed punishment that is proportionate to the offence
- the impact it has on the injured party
- the impact it has on the school.

The punishment could range from:

- a fixed term exclusion/supporting expectations up to 5 days
- a written agreement stating their remorse and acceptance of their behaviour
- assurance this form of conduct will not happen again with a joint agreement signed by the offender and a parent/carer.

Future conduct could result in either police involvement/and or permanent exclusion. The meeting to sign the agreement with parent/carer and offender could be with your police school link officer.

No matter what form bullying takes, it is all abhorrent and damages both the victim and the bully to differing extents. The academy will make use of the best information and practices available to eradicate this problem.

Staff and parents/carers should be aware of when a learner is possibly the victim of a bully.

Symptoms may be:

- Frightened to walk to and from the academy.
- Doesn't want to use the academy transport.
- Asks to be driven to the academy.
- Changes the usual route to the academy.
- Is unwilling to go to the academy.
- Begins to truant.
- Frequently complaining of being unwell both at home and at the academy.
- Becomes isolated and withdrawn.
- School work is affected
- Has clothing and belongings that get damaged or go missing.
- Has physical bruising or other evidence of assault.
- Has dinner and other monies that are frequently 'lost'.
- Refuses to attend particular lessons.
- Wants to stay close to a particular teacher or remains in the classroom at break time, lunch time and after school.
- Becomes aggressive or unreasonable.
- Stops eating.
- Runs away or threatens self-harm.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could have other causes, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Dealing with Bullying

Prevention and Education

All incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. Staff will do all they can to support the victims of bullying and make it clear to the bully that this behaviour is not acceptable.

The following strategies should be in place to ensure that the correct ethos towards bullying is established and that learners are prepared and can act confidently should bullying occur.

The Trust's policy on bullying is known to trustees, parents/carers, staff and learners.

All learners should know that bullying is totally unacceptable in the academy. They should also know that if they are bullied it is not their fault. Learners should be encouraged to report any bullying incident, even if they are not personally involved.

- The PSHCE programme should include opportunities for learners to discuss bullying and the bully and to explore feelings and attitudes.

- Teachers should be aware of potential difficulties between learners and take them into consideration in seating plans and general classroom management.
- Staff on duty and lunchtime supervisors should regularly patrol areas of the site where bullying might go on undetected.
- The academy should provide ‘quiet’ areas which are supervised at breaks and lunchtimes so that nervous or vulnerable learners can go somewhere they feel completely safe.
- The academy’s induction programme for learners should be used to support vulnerable learners and help them to settle in.

What Parents/Carers Should Do

All parents/carers should be made aware of the Trust’s policy when their learner joins the academy and reminded at appropriate times. In addition, parents/carers should be reminded through academy communications that if they think their learner is being bullied they should:

- Reassure the learner. It is not their fault and the matter will be dealt with sensitively.
- The learner has done the correct thing in ‘telling’.
- Contact the learner’s Form Tutor/Head of Year

What Learners Should Do

Learners should be regularly reminded that the academy will not tolerate bullying and that if it occurs they should:

- Tell someone immediately, at home or at the academy, even if they are not personally being bullied but have seen it with others.
- Use ‘safe’ areas in the academy during break times until the matter comes to the attention of an adult.

What Academy Staff Should Do

- If a learner discloses bullying to a member of staff, they should deal with the matter immediately. The learner may have worried over their problem for some time and will want it to be dealt with quickly.
- Staff should take all disclosures seriously, even if, as adults, they do not think the incidents described are ‘real’ bullying or very serious. Staff should remember that learners have a very different perception of what may or may not be serious.
- Staff should be aware that insensitive handling of a bullying incident might result in more not less difficulty for the victim. If staff are unsure how to proceed they should always take advice.

At all times, staff dealing with bullying incidents should ensure that:

- Parents/carers are fully involved and informed of the actions the academy has taken.
- Written records are kept of meetings, decisions and actions.
- Learners are monitored i.e. by daily report during the reconciliation period.
- The ‘victim’ is never isolated from lessons because of the potential actions of others. If any learner needs to be withdrawn because of a potentially threatening situation it should be the aggressor.

- If there is any real and immediate threat to a learner’s safety, senior staff are informed so that more radical, preventative action can be taken.

Different circumstances may require different approaches but usually will include the following:

- Both the victim and the bully/bullies will be interviewed and counselled by an appropriate member of staff. Letters will be sent to the parents/carers of both parties.
- The victim should be given a ‘safe haven’ if required for break times until the matter is resolved and coping strategies for the short term.
- The consequences of further aggression by the bully, if substantiated, should be made clear and the sanctions that the academy will enforce should be outlined. The ‘bully’ should give some undertaking of how he/she can improve the situation.
- Where appropriate the two parties should meet face to face to discuss the situation and how it may be resolved.
- Both ‘victim’ and ‘bully’ should record in writing their view of events.
- The member of staff should make a written record for the Principal as appropriate.

If the problem persists:

- Both sets of parents/carers should be seen in school. A strategy to move forward will be discussed separately. At this point external support or advice may be considered.
- Contracts should be drawn up with the learners and parents/carers agreeing to the course of action.

If the situation is not resolved:

The matter would then become subject to more serious sanctions and if the problem persisted could lead to exclusion.

If counselling and other preventative measures, such as peer support strategies do not succeed, persistent bullying will be dealt with under the academy’s Behaviour Policy. The bully may for example:

- Be removed from the group.
- Be put in detention.
- Be banned from an academy trip or other events where these are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- Be placed in the academy’s Supporting Expectations for a fixed period.
- Referred to the academy’s police liaison officer.

Performance Indicators

The academy will use a number of performance indicators to gauge the extent of bullying:

- Learner behaviour on the site

- Levels of punctuality and attendance
- Evidence of self-discipline
- Good manners and consideration for others
- Levels of exclusion
- Police referrals
- Referrals through the pastoral support programme for agency involvement
- Feedback from learner councils and parental/carer questionnaires

Review of This Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that current legislation and best practice is recorded.

This policy will be additionally reviewed when there are changes in legislation or guidance from the DfE, to ensure that best practice is effectively applied to all academy procedures.

Appendix I: Useful references

- <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school>
- <https://www.learnerline.org.uk/>
- <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603107/Learnerren_and_young_people_s_mental_health_peer_support.pdf
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/learner_safety/
- <https://transformingconflict.org/>