



Bexhill
Academy



Friendship and Anti Bullying Policy 2023-2024

Reviewed: October 2023

Next Review: October 2024

FRIENDSHIP AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

For Bexhill Academy

This policy was adopted on 4.10.23

This policy is due for review on 4.10.24

BULLYING: OUR ACADEMY'S VALUES AND BELIEFS:

Bexhill Academy is an 11-16 academy. The school serves the coastal town of Bexhill on Sea with most students living locally within the catchment area, travelling to school by foot or public transport. As the main community comprehensive in the town, the town's problems are our problems. The other comprehensive is an 11-16 Roman Catholic College, which has a wider catchment area. Employment and unemployment rates in the area are both below the national average, as the area has an above average proportion of retired residents.

These are our principles:

All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included.

Pupils and staff have the right to work in an environment without harassment, intimidation or fear.

All bullying, of any sort, is therefore unacceptable. The academy has a zero tolerance approach to child on child abuse, including bullying.

Pupils who experience bullying will be supported and educated

We recognise the effects that bullying can have on pupil's feelings of worth and on their learning, therefore our community will actively promote an anti-bullying environment.

We will work closely with parents, and wider community links and partners, to proactively support safety and an anti-bullying ethos inside and outside of school.

OUR DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be unpleasant and upsetting 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 students disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult intervention. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both students will be encouraged to resolve the problem using restorative practices. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying involves dominance of one pupil by another or a group of others, is pre-meditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour and an imbalance of power.

Bullying is,

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face to face or through online.”

In exceptional circumstances, previous repeated actions may be reported or discovered following a specific incident. In these circumstances, they will be treated and followed up as bullying.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance states that:

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful;
- Repeated, often over a period of time;
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

It can take many forms but the main types are:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking another's belongings;
- Verbal - name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks;
- Indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours;
- Online - All areas of the internet, such as email or gaming; mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology and images, i.e. camera and video. This may also include taking images of victims without their knowledge or consent.
- **Online Bullying**
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- Online bullying is the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.
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- Behaviour that is classed as online bullying includes:
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- **Abusive comments**, rumours, gossip and threats made over the internet or using other digital communications – this includes internet trolling.
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- **Sharing pictures**, videos or personal information without the consent of the owner and with the intent to cause harm and/or humiliation.
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- **Hacking** into someone else's email, phone or online profile to extract and share personal information, or send abusive or inappropriate content while posing as that person. This can also involve online theft.
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- **Creating** specific websites that negatively target an individual or group typically by posting content that intends to humiliate, ostracise and/or threaten.
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- **Blackmail** or pressurising someone to do something online that they do not want to do.
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- Online bullying will be treated with the same intolerance and in the same ways as of any other form of bullying in the academy.
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- Online bullying can be reported through the same channels of communication outlined further on in this policy.
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- There is more advice in the Bexhill Academy OnLine Safety Policy and also on the academy's Information and Advice section on the website.
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- The academy will educate pupils about online bullying through PSHEe lessons, assemblies and tutor activities, as well as opportunities within the wider academy safeguarding curriculum.
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- The Academy will endeavour to keep up to date with the internet technologies being used by pupils both within and outside academy.
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- Some forms of bullying are attacks not only on the individual, but also on the group to which he or she may belong. Within the academy we will pay particular attention to:

WHY ARE YOUNG PEOPLE BULLIED?

Children and young people are most commonly bullied because of a real or perceived difference:

- **Racist bullying** based on ethnicity, skin colour, language, religious or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic bullying, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying**
- **Disablist bullying**, the bullying of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Sexual bullying and sexual harassment**, unwelcome sexual advances, remarks that are intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.
- **Discriminative bullying** based on any perceived weakness such as children in fostering or care homes, young carers, those with disabled siblings or parents, single parents families, low economic backgrounds etc.
- **LGBT+ parents** based on the children of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender couples.
- **Body image** including size, hair colour etc.

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

The effects of bullying are severe and can often continue long into adulthood. Children who are bullied are more likely to:

- have low self-esteem;
- develop depression or anxiety;
- become socially withdrawn, isolated and lonely;
- have lower academic achievements;
- be unable to form trusting, healthy relationships with friends or partners in the future;
- be prone to outbursts of anger and aggression.

CREATING AN ANTI-BULLYING CLIMATE IN THE ACADEMY

The academy has a legal duty under the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equalities Act 2010 to prevent and tackle bullying.

Our aim is to promote appropriate behaviour through direct teaching, and by creating an emotionally and socially safe environment where these skills are learned and practiced. Our aim is to create a climate where bullying is not accepted by anyone within the academy community.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 states that “**Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges.**” This includes, “**the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.**”

To address these additional challenges, Bexhill Academy will consider extra support for children with SEND and certain medical conditions, including increased access to The Hub Provision when required.

THE ACADEMY'S STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING INCLUDE:

- Vigilance by all
- Befriending
- Restorative Practice by Adults
- Sanctions as listed in our behaviour policy
- Mental Health First Aiders including Milo's Space
- Student LGBT Support Group : Peer Led
- LGBT Plus Safe Spaces
- Social Use of Language Programme
- Nurture Groups
- ACE Provision
- Education through PSHEe, assemblies, Tutor Programme and the whole academy safeguarding curriculum
- Promotion of National Anti-Bullying Week – the theme for 2023 is Make a Noise about bullying
- The Learning Resource Hub (Library)
- Students who show repeated bullying behaviours will be required to attend enhanced educational activities
- Education and advice from the Police Youth Intervention Team
- Sanctions, including suspension and permanent exclusions

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS WHEN THEY OCCUR

Pupils who have been bullied should report this to any member of staff. You can talk to **anyone** you trust in the first instance – but be sure it is reported to an adult

Pupils who see others being bullied should report this to any member of staff.

Members of staff who receive reports that a pupil has been bullied must report this on Myconcern and also log the issue on Class Charts. This ensures the behaviour is followed up according to the Behaviour Policy.

Reports of bullying will be logged by referral on My Concern.

Where bullying is a racist, homophobic or hate attack, a report will be made to the police if required in liaison with the student and parents/carers.

Where required the academy will report incidents to external agencies such as Children's Services via the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Guidance on bullying for teaching and support staff is provided in the Safeguarding Induction process. Further updates are provided for all staff by the academy's Safeguarding Team through the compulsory staff CPD programme.

All reports will be taken seriously and will be followed up by the relevant staff, including the Learning Leader, Pastoral Manager or Form Tutor.

We will provide support to pupils who are bullied:

- They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault.
- We will assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We will encourage them to talk about how they feel.
- We will try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We will engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We will try to ensure that they feel safe.
- We will discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We will ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We will affirm that the bullying can be stopped and that our academy will persist with intervention until it does.
- We will listen to their version of events.
- We will interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying.
- We will talk to anyone else who may have witnessed the bullying.
- We will reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.
- We will adopt a joint problem solving approach where this is appropriate, and ask the pupils involved to help us find solutions to the problem. This will encourage pupils involved to take responsibility for the emotional and social needs of others.
- We will consider sanctions under our academy's Culture for Learning Policy.
- When bullying occurs, we will contact the parents of the pupil involved at an early stage.
- We will keep records of incidents that we become aware of and how we responded to them.
- We will follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again.
- If the expertise is not available within the academy we will refer to the relevant outside agencies such as CAMHS and My Time.

Support for the victim includes:

- Offering continuous support with a designated member of staff/key contact.
- Referral to an outside agency if appropriate.
- Referral to the Listening Service, MHFA, School Health Team, or Nurture Group if required.

WHEN TOUGHER MEASURES ARE NEEDED

If necessary, we will invoke the full range of sanctions that are detailed in the Academy's Culture for Learning Policy. These may include:

- Removal from the group/form;
- Verbal warning;
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime;
- After school SLT Detention;
- Behaviour report/Contract with Year Team;
- Internal Exclusion;
- Withholding participation in academy events that are not an essential part of the curriculum, such as playing for a sports team.

The range of strategies also includes fixed term and permanent exclusion from academy. If the bullying is in the form of a serious physical attack, the Academy will not hesitate to involve the Police.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone within the Academy is expected to:

- Act in a respectful and supportive way towards one another.
- Adhere to and to promote the objectives of this policy.

Staff are expected to adhere to the aims of this policy and challenge bullying wherever they may come across it.

Trust Board members are expected to monitor the behaviour within the academy with particular regard to bullying (and other forms of Peer-on-Peer Abuse), ensuring the academy is challenging bullying and taking steps to promote an anti-bullying climate with regular data checking to track trends and frequency.

Students are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying and suspected incidents that victims may be afraid to report.
- Support each other and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid in the Academy.
- To intervene (if safe to do so) or to seek immediate help.

Remember if you are a **Bystander** you:

- Know what is going on;
- Will be worried about someone;
- May not know what to do;
- May be worried about being seen as a "grass";
- May be implicated if you do not report the bullying.

Parents/carers can help by:

- Supporting our Friendship and Anti-bullying policy, the Home School Agreement and academy procedures.
- Discussing with their child's teacher any concerns that their child may be experiencing bullying or involved in some other way.
- Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of the Academy.
- Be proactive in communicating concerns on social media or outside of Academy premises in a timely way. This can be done by contacting the Academy dsl@bexhillacademy.org

EVALUATING OUR POLICY

We evaluate and review our Friendship and Anti-bullying policy on an annual basis or as guidance is issued. When reviewing the policy we will involve pupils, parents, Trust Board Members and staff. If concerns are raised about the policy, these will be investigated and the policy adapted if necessary. The review will be carried out using the following measures:

- The numbers of incidents that are reported to staff over a given period. This is reviewed by the Academy's Trust Board.
- Pupils' perceptions of bullying in the academy through student voice activities
- We will investigate patterns of absence to support children taking unnecessary days off school due to fear of being bullied.
- Responding to local and national concerns e.g. an increase in patterns of behaviours.

OWNERSHIP OF THIS POLICY

This policy was drawn up by staff and pupils, including the Student Council, the WellBeing Ambassadors and the LGBT Plus Amabassadors and with support from student voice.

The policy applies to all staff and to all pupils, whether temporarily or permanently on the Academy roll.