

	Anti-bullying Policy	
	Last reviewed: September 2021	Next review: September 2022
	Linked Governor: Tracey Evans	SLT Member: Rich Peters

1 Scope of policy

Ashlyns School believes that everyone has the right to feel welcome, safe and happy and is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community are able to achieve their potential without the fear of being subjected to hurtful behaviour.

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to implement these anti-bullying procedures and it is our aim to prevent bullying by establishing a positive environment and encouraging standards of behaviour that promote a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.

At Ashlyns School, we take the issue of hurtful behaviour and bullying very seriously. Students, parents/carers and staff should understand that reporting instances of bullying or hurtful behaviour is essential and be assured that they will be fully supported.

It should be noted that the use of technology to intimidate others is an increasing national trend and that such forms of bullying will also be dealt with robustly under the school's anti-bullying procedures.

2 What is bullying?

Whilst there is no single definition of bullying, the Department for Education provides the following guidance:

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. ('Preventing and Tackling Bullying', DfE July 2017)

Most definitions of bullying include the following dimensions:

- The bullying is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated
- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator of bullying and the target

2.1 Forms of bullying

Forms of bullying can include:

- emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- cyber using any area of the internet or social media to threaten, intimidate, degrade, embarrass or upset others

2.3 Reasons for bullying

People may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:

- ethnic background, religion or culture
- disability, education needs or being particularly able, gifted or talented
- sexual orientation
- gender (including sexualised bullying)
- size, appearance or health conditions
- social or economic status
- age/maturity
- home circumstances

3 Signs and symptoms

A young person may display signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Whilst not exhaustive or always an indication of bullying, adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a young person:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn or anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with damaged clothing or property
- has possessions which 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing
- continually 'loses' dinner or other monies
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

- is afraid of the internet or mobile devices

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

4 Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to challenge hurtful behaviour or bullying if it occurs. All staff are made aware of the procedures they should follow if an incidence of hurtful behaviour is brought to their attention. The first point of contact for parents should be the student's Form Tutor and then the Head of Year. The Headteacher is responsible for this policy.

4.1 The role of the school

Ashlyns School adopts a range of strategies to reduce bullying and tackle it effectively when it does occur. These include:

- preventing, de-escalating and stopping any harmful behaviour
- maintaining a culture, which encourages and enables students to report bullying incidents
- reacting to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- taking measures to safeguard the student who has experienced the bullying and implement sources of support for the student where appropriate
- applying disciplinary consequences to the student causing the bullying
- working with the student who has caused the bullying to ensure they learn from the experience, for example through mediation or multi-agency support
- involving staff, parents/carers and students in the resolution of conflicts that may arise
- developing and implementing new strategies to prevent and tackle bullying
- regularly reviewing policies and strategies
- involving staff, parents/carers and students in any conflicts that may arise
- developing and implementing new strategies to tackle bullying

4.2 The role of staff

All staff have an important role to play in ensuring that bullying is identified and reported. Staff should ensure that they:

- understand the principles and purpose of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- understand their responsibilities regarding bullying
- know what consequences and behaviour management strategies are in place and where to seek support
- understand the needs of vulnerable students
- know the procedures for reporting and referral
- use form time and curriculum time to promote an open and honest dialogue with their students about bullying and ways to prevent it

4.3 The role of students

Students also play a vital role in tackling bullying and they should ensure that they:

- know and understand the Anti-Bullying Policy
- know and understand the difference between harassment or unkind behaviour and bullying
- feel confident that the school will act quickly and fairly with any bullying issues that are reported
- know the consequences if they are found to be bullying
- respond honestly to questionnaires or discussions about bullying
- take responsibility for their own behaviour to ensure they are not being hurtful to others in school, whether intentionally or otherwise
- report bullying to a peer or adult if they are **either** the victim of bullying **or** witness bullying of others

4.4 The role of parents/carers

Parents and carers should work in partnership with the school to support children who are being bullied or who bully. Parents should ensure that they:

- report any incidents of bullying to the school
- look for signs of behaviour change which are often linked with bullying (see **section 3**)
- are proactive in monitoring their child's phone and internet access, in particular social networking sites
- support the school in their actions, including where sanctions are imposed on their child if they have been found responsible for bullying
- promote tolerance and kindness

5 Actions to prevent bullying

We adopt a proactive approach to preventing bullying, being vigilant for signs of bullying and taking reports of bullying seriously. Students are provided with regular opportunities to talk about bullying, and we listen to their views in order to adapt our strategies for dealing with bullying. Assemblies, whole school questionnaires, Student Voice, curriculum time and form time all focus on the issues of bullying and how to tackle it as a whole school community. A variety of methods and services are used in order to prevent bullying, including:

- assemblies
- regular discussions about bullying
- annual bullying survey
- Student Leadership Team discussions
- Anti-Bullying week
- behaviour reports
- protective behaviours courses
- peer mentoring
- support from Learning Mentors
- support from Student Support Workers
- support from external agencies
- referrals to School Counsellor
- display materials around school
- organisation of our school day
- organisation of the school environment

- Rewards and Consequences procedures
- Online reporting procedure through the RUnify 'Learning Mentor' tab

6 Actions to tackle bullying

All reported incidents of hurtful behaviour or bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all incidents.

All incidents are dealt with on an individual basis, but the following illustrates the steps that may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- Where bullying or hurtful behaviour is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who witnessed it or the person to whom the behaviour was reported.
- Statements from all parties involved (including any witnesses) will be taken and collated by the member of staff investigating.
- After investigating the incident, a decision will be made about any outcomes, including support systems, consequences and monitoring processes.
- All parties will be kept informed about what steps taken and the situation will be closely monitored.
- Where appropriate, students will undergo a process of reconciliation if all parties agree to this.
- Students who have been found to have bullied others will be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and that repeated behaviour will incur further consequences.

Parents/carers of both the victim and the bully will be kept informed about incidents and any action taken, or to be taken, by the school, although the school will not discuss specific actions relating to any child other than your own. Parents/carers are asked to support the strategies that the school puts in place. Further information about the consequences of bullying can be found in the Behaviour Policy.

If a parent/carer is concerned about bullying they should contact their child's form tutor in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved and a parent/carer wishes to take the matter further, they should then contact the Head of Year, followed by the Assistant Headteacher.

7 Cyberbullying

If a student has been the victim of cyberbullying, the school reserves the right to be involved whether the electronic material was produced within the school or outside as such incidents often continue within school. Even where online bullying occurs exclusively beyond school, students must be aware that **many forms of cyberbullying are illegal and the school will inform the police if necessary**. The school may review electronic material held or accessed by any student in the school if cyberbullying is suspected.

8 External Agencies

In some cases it is appropriate to involve external agencies to aid in an investigation or to support students who have been involved in bullying, such as the police, PCSOs, DESC, Youth Connexions and school counsellors. If this is the case, parents/carers will be informed.

9 Support services for parents who are concerned about their child

There are a number of support services available to parents/carers, including:

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

Bullying UK www.bullying.co.uk

Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk