

Anti-bullying Policy

Responsible officer: I. Johnson

Review frequency: Annual

Principal: R. Denial

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Introduction

The E-ACT Burnham Park Academy recognises that bullying exists and as bullying will have a negative effect on behaviour for learning, the self-esteem of our young people and the culture and ethos of the school we feel that the school's anti-bullying policy should be an integral part of the academy's behaviour policy.

Bullying must be managed effectively and assertively confronted. All in the academy community must be clear that whilst shared values might not always be possible, hurtful language and or behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Principal and Academy have specific duties to combat bullying. Improved Ethos, Improved attendance, improved attainment, improved self-esteem and Every Child Matters are the drivers behind this policy.

Improved Ethos is produced by the promotion of anti-bullying strategies in an academy by encouraging good behaviour and positive attitudes. Good behaviour and attitudes to the academy, together with good teaching, create a positive attitude to learning. Young people and adults perform better in a caring, supportive and safe environment, which is free of the fear of being bullied. Bullying must be addressed as an anti-social behaviour and not accepted as inevitable. It must be seen as unacceptable and not to be tolerated by adults, children and young people. It is only when the problems caused by bullying are effectively addressed that all those in the academy community can fully benefit from the opportunities available at the academy.

Improved Attendance is a major outcome of an effective anti-bullying policy. As a working document an effective anti-bullying policy helps to reassure parents, young people and staff that action will be taken to end bullying and prevent its reoccurrence.

Improved Attainment and Performance can be achieved by the successful implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy. Young people and staff who don't feel safe do not work to their potential.

Improved Self-Esteem of both the bullied and the bully. Those who are bullied are often devastated by the treatment received and this increases the chances of depression, self-harm and, in extreme cases possibly suicide.

Every Child Matters The five outcomes of Every Child Matters are in tune with this policy which endeavours to create a positive ethos where members of the academy's community work without fear, achieve through enjoyment, lack mental and physical stress, feel part of the academy and the local community and Young people leave as contented adults ready to take part in the next stage of their lives.

What is Bullying?

When dealing with a bully the definition can be used to gain greater understanding.

A definition

- Bullying has been defined as Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.
- Bullying includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and

emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others.

- 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. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and academy staff can be significant.

The four methods of bullying are:

- Physical(hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal(name calling, racist remarks)
- Indirect(spreading rumours, excluding someone from a social group)
- Cyber(using computers or mobile phones to intimidate or humiliate)

The main types of bullying are:

- Homophobic
- Racist
- Appearance
- SEN/Disability
- Sexual
- Health
- Income based
- Transgender

All in the academy community are aware that these are types of bullying and the academy will not tolerate them.

- There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying — all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is an aggressive act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against another person or persons who cannot defend themselves.

The main types of Cyberbullying are

- Text message bullying
- Picture/video clip bullying via mobile phone cameras
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone
- Email bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying through Instant messaging
- Bullying via websites

In order to prevent Cyberbullying we will:

- Ensure that all members of the academy community have sufficient knowledge to deal with this new technology.
- Deliver Cyber safety part of the curriculum
- Block harmful websites at the academy
- Inform parents through newsletters and information leaflets so that the same standards are observed out of the academy.
- Where appropriate, work with outside agencies to manage cyberbullying
- If an incident does occur the procedures for dealing with bullying as detailed in this document will be followed.

Cyber Bullying and Criminal Law

Although bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, cyberbullying can quite often be a criminal act. Some acts of cyberbullying will be classed as criminal under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Communications Act 2003. If the designated child protection officer in consultation with the Principal feel an offence may have been committed they will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic abuse and harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Homophobic bullying is defined as any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males, bisexuals, transgender or those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

These actions might be:

- verbal, physical, or emotional (social exclusion) harassment, insulting or degrading comments, name calling, gestures, taunts, insults or 'jokes'
- offensive graffiti
- humiliating, excluding, tormenting, ridiculing or threatening refusing to work or co-operate with others because of their sexual orientation or identity.

Responding to homophobic bullying

Academy staff interact with young people on a daily basis and are more likely to see, and be told about, incidents of homophobic bullying. It is important that staff responses are swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective. Adults should feel able to respond effectively to incidents of homophobic bullying, and instil confidence in pupils and parents/carers that issues will be dealt with.

Responding to homophobic language

Casual homophobic language is common in academy's but, if it is not challenged, young people may think that homophobic bullying is acceptable. It is therefore important to challenge homophobic language when it occurs:

- Ensure that young people know that homophobic language will not be tolerated in school. Make sure it is included in policies and procedures.
- When an incident occurs, pupils should be informed that homophobic language is offensive, and will not be tolerated.
- If a young person continues to make homophobic remarks, explain in detail the effects that homophobic bullying has on people.
- If a young person makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the classroom and teachers and staff should talk to him or her in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, involve senior managers. The pupil should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use homophobic language.
- Consider inviting the parents/carers to school to discuss the attitudes of the pupil.

Responding to physical homophobic bullying

Like verbal abuse, pupils may be reluctant to report incidents of homophobic bullying because they fear that staff will assume they are gay, even if they are not. Physical abuse can indicate a young person is at risk, and the overarching strategies that are implemented to safeguard pupils might be appropriate in this context, for example working with other agencies, including, if necessary, the police. When physical abuse is motivated by homophobic bullying it must be treated with the same rigor and standards as any physical assault. Homophobic violence can be a crime.

Prevention

The extent of homophobic bullying will be assessed and monitored through anonymous staff and pupil survey.

When reporting a bullying incident staff must specify if it is a homophobic incident.

The awareness of homophobic bullying will be raised through the academy community by the work of student committees, curriculum, assemblies, displays and staff training. Research has shown that when an academy recognizes homophobic bullying, incidents have decreased.

Racist Bullying

- Racism exists in wider society and can lead to racist bullying within academies. The law recognizes the seriousness of racism by requiring that courts should impose higher sentences when an offence is aggravated by racist or religious hostility.
- The distinctive feature of a racist attack or insult is that a person is attacked not as an individual, as in most other offences, but as the representative of a family, community or group.
- Racist words and behaviour are experienced as attacks on the values, loyalties and commitments central to a person's sense of identity and self worth.
- Racist attacks are committed not only against a community but also, in the eyes of offenders themselves, on behalf of a community. Offenders often see themselves as representatives of, and supported in their racism by, their friends, family and peer group and they may feel it is right and proper to take the law into their own hands.
- Most bullying involves a series of incidents over time. In the case of racist bullying, however, a single one off incident may have precisely the same impact as a series of incidents over time. This is because it may be experienced by the person at the receiving end as part of a general pattern of racist hostility.

Prevention

- The academy will record, report and take action on all racist bullying incidents. Incidents will be recorded via referrals and annual questionnaires.
- Any racist incident must be dealt with. Members of the academy community must ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- The awareness of racist bullying will be raised through the academy community student by the work of committees, curriculum, assemblies, displays and staff training.

What bullying is not

It is important that all members of the school community have a clear understanding of not only what bullying is, but also what it is not.

- It is not usually a one off incident but is repeated over time. There can be exceptions, for example racist bullying.
- Bullying involves the abuse of power. Therefore a fight between two people is not a bullying incident, even if one wins.
- A serious one off, for example an unprovoked attack may not be bullying. However if the perpetrator has been involved in a number of serious one off incidents against weaker members of the community it may be classified as bullying.

Young people at increased risk of being the victims or perpetrators of bullying are those who:

- Are in foster care or looked-after children
- Have a specific educational need
- Have a disability or impairment
- Are from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Are refugees or asylum seekers
- Start an academy or activity group mid-term
- Are, or perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
- Speak a first language other than English
- Are young carers
- Have suffered bereavement
- Have suffered domestic violence
- Have experienced physical or emotional trauma
- Have a parent that was the victim of bullying

All adults at The E-ACT Burnham Park Academy are made aware of these high risk groups.

When bullying is reported or suspected

If bullying is reported or suspected the member of the academy community to whom it is reported should take immediate action. The prevention of bullying is the responsibility of everyone.

- A referral must be filled in identifying the type of bullying and describing the incident. This should be immediately passed to the relevant link Assistant Principal.
- All parties must be interviewed separately and the outcomes carefully recorded.
- If it is felt there is a continued risk to one of the parties steps must be taken to ensure their safety. This must involve contacting parents, isolating young people and

ensuring young people's safe return home at the end of the academy day. Any decision to send a young person home for health and safety reasons must be made by the Principal.

- Parents must be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- Preventative, restorative and/or punitive measures will be used as appropriate.
- The decision on sanctions will follow school discipline procedures. The decision will be made in consultation with an Assistant Principal or the Vice Principal. Bullying can lead to isolation, internal exclusion and ultimately permanent exclusion.
- Form teachers must be kept clearly informed and if the bullying persists the form teacher must make subject teachers aware.
- Parents must be informed of any outcomes.

Support

It is important that the victims of bullying are supported. Being bullied at any age is traumatic. It is important that we as a school community live up to our core values by offering support that is sympathetic, timely and effective. The following support mechanisms can be used when appropriate:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with an adult or peer of the bullied Young people's choice.
- Offering continuous support over a period of time as appropriate e.g. daily visits to a key adult.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence through mentoring, peer mentoring, group work and use of outside agencies.
- If a child is repeatedly bullied by different people consideration should be given to helping them learn particular skills.

Possible preventative responses to bullying:

- Mediation
- Restorative Justice
- Peer Support
- Befriending/Buddy System

It is important that the above responses are used appropriately, monitored and use members of the school community who are adequately qualified to lead these initiatives.

Training

All staff will be made aware of the policy at staff training. It will be made clear what they must do when a bullying incident occurs or is suspected. This training will be delivered at regular intervals to ensure new staff are aware of the policy and the accompanying practice.

Young people will be made aware of the policy and the academy's anti-bullying stance through student committees, curriculum, assemblies, displays and newsletters.

The parental leaflet will be updated annually and made available to parents at parent's evenings, Academic review days, new intake evening and open evening.

Parents will be kept informed of progress and new initiatives through the weekly newsletter.

Curriculum

The curriculum plays an important part in educating and challenging behaviour.

Staying Safe, bullying, cyberbullying, racism and sexual orientation are all covered in the curriculum, either at Key Stage 3, 4 or both.

Community

The academy will work closely with its community to ensure that bullying is addressed in a consistent way in school and in the community.

Both the school and community will strive to share best practice and deliver a strong, coherent and consistent message.

Bullying Outside School Premises

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff it will be investigated and acted on. If appropriate the police or anti-social coordinator in the local authority will be notified. (See Behaviour for Learning policy).