Anti-Bullying Policy

Updated March 2022

Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims and Values

This policy is designed to support all members of the Academy's community in achieving its aim of creating a safe, disciplined and focused environment where student learning is at the centre of everything we do. We believe in the transformative power of education and therefore place enormous value on cultivating a passion for learning and intellectual curiosity. This is supported by the high expectations placed on students in relation to their behaviour and conduct in the Academy. A disorderly environment not only impacts on a child's ability to learn but it can also affect their mental well-being and ability to forge positive social connections. Our Academy is a vibrant community that takes prides in its diversity, we are committed to supporting our students in developing empathy for, understanding of and appreciation for the views, lifestyles and opinions of others. The consistent application of this policy, and others related to this policy, therefore ensures all spaces in the Academy are calm, well controlled and allow students to enjoy their learning and opportunities to socialise, develop and play beyond the classroom.

Ashcroft Technology Academy is committed to:

- Providing a safe, caring and friendly environment where no type of bullying (virtual or actual) or abuse is tolerated.
- Providing a curriculum, which enables all students to develop respect for themselves, for others, and on dealing with instances of unpleasantness of bullying – against themselves or peers.
- Providing a clear and robust behaviour management policy in which guidelines for staff and students are clear and consistent.
- Recognising that bullying can have a profound and negative effect on victims and therefore all reports of bullying received by the Academy will be investigated properly and will be dealt with fairly and robustly.
- Ensuring students understand that harassment of any kind is not acceptable, that it will never be tolerated and that it is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Educating and empowering students to 'call out' any form of harassment or coercive behaviour they witness in the Academy.
- Providing a system, and identifying key staff within this system, which supports both the victim and the bully in order that all instances of bullying are stopped immediately.
- Working with parents and external agencies where necessary to overcome intense difficulties.

What is Bullying?

The Department for Education (DfE) defines bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that is intended to hurt or harm another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both those who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

It can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Verbal	cussing, name-calling, threats and spreading rumours
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or using any other form of violence
Exclusion	deliberate exclusion or making a student feel unwanted
Extortion	forcing victim to give money or possessions, buy food
Racist	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, names or mimicking
Sexual	unwanted suggestive or physical contact, or sexually based comments
Homophobic	comments or gestures made because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Disability	discrimination on grounds of differences
Transphobic	discrimination against or aversion to transsexuality and transsexual or transgendered or gender fluid people
Online	any form or abusive or coercive behaviour on any social media platform or chatroom – to include trolling, generation of fake accounts, group chats or direct messaging
SEND	any form of abusive or coercive behaviour based on a student's educational needs or development

Cyber Bullying

This is defined as the use of technology such as mobile phones, email, chat rooms or any social media sites as a conduit to harass, threaten, embarrass, intimidate or target someone. Mobile phones are banned in the Academy and it is therefore the responsibility of parents to ensure that they closely monitor the online activities of their child at home to ensure that they are prevented from engaging in negative online behaviours and also protected from any unpleasantness.

Forms of cyber bullying

- Trolling: online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged. The aim of trolling is to cause reactions and people often get enjoyment from the victim's distress.
- Catfishing: creating fake profiles on social network sites, apps and online in order to harass others anonymously.
- Denigration: putting false, unkind or unpleasant online messages in emails, instant messaging or chat rooms.
- Outing/exposing: sharing or coaxing someone into revealing secrets online including private information, pictures, and videos. Usually involves screenshotting and forwarding to others.
- Trickery: tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.

- Impersonation: pretending to be someone else when sending or posting mean or false messages online.
- Harassment: repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.
- Cyber-stalking: repeated messages that include threats of harm, harassment, intimidation or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety.
- Online sexual harassment: sending unwanted images or messages of a sexual content. This could include trying to persuade someone into returning images of themselves and/or doing something they are not comfortable with

What is not considered to be bullying?

Whilst we accept that children may encounter social or friendship issues, it is important that students understand that some negative behaviours displayed by others may be unpleasant, but would not be classified as bulling and therefore not necessarily dealt with through the Academy's behaviour policy. These include:

- not liking someone
- being excluded
- accidentally bumping into someone;
- a single act of telling a joke about someone
- arguments
- expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others

Procedures

It is important that all allegations of unpleasantness or bullying are taken seriously, thoroughly investigated and that steps are taken to ensure that the situation is not made worse and that there is no reoccurrence.

The member of Leadership Group (LG) responsible for the year group of the child who has reported bullying (either by themselves or by their parents) will coordinate the investigation. ICAS will conduct the investigation and report findings to the member of LG. ICAS will use its statement protocol to ensure all details are recorded so members of LG can ensure an appropriate sanction is set.

When an incident of bullying is reported the Head of ICAS will assign responsibility for co-ordinating the investigation to a specific mentor.

- All students involved will be provided with a statement form
- Students will be asked to write a full account, with a high level of detail and in chronological order
- The ICAS Mentor will collate all statements and conduct any further investigations required
- The relevant member/s of LG will then be provided with an overview summary of the incident so that this can be discussed with the Principal and sanctions agreed
- In most cases (this will be dependent on situation and characters involved), the victim will be offered an opportunity to meet the bully and express their feelings
- Ensure both the victim and parents are aware of the sanctions that have been set. The LG member and/or HoY will meet with the parents of those responsible for the bullying to go through the investigation
- Both victim and bully may need further support to ensure that the situation is fully resolved and does not reoccur
- The situation should be monitored to ensure that it has been finally resolved

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, particularly if, in the professional judgement of the HoY or LG member, parents of both parties need to be contacted or external agencies need to be involved.

Curriculum

Strategies that support the prevention of bullying include extensive use of the Academy curriculum. Ashcroft has a strong ethos of inclusion, this extends to an inclusive curriculum where bespoke CPSE lessons ensures students develop a strong personal identity, whilst understanding and respecting the identities of others. An inclusive curriculum which supports all students' individual life journey together, with a pastoral focus through assemblies, provides extensive opportunities to explore the issues and impact of bullying and ensures that students feel confident in 'calling out' these behaviours, if seen in the Academy.

How to Identify Bullying

Students may not always be willing to disclose when bullying is occurring. If a member of staff suspects that there is a difficulty, they should report this concern to the student's HoY without delay.

Students are encouraged to 'call out' bullying when it is seen (even if simply a perception), whether as a victim or as an observer. Students are educated on the importance of reporting issues and concerns to staff and providing evidence, if needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Leadership Group have overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Alleged incidents of bullying will be managed sensitively according to the circumstances and will be recorded and analysed to see whether patterns emerge.

All staff share responsibility for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied without regard to ethnic origin, cultural differences, gender, disability or sexuality issues. Mutual support amongst all staff is essential for creating a high-quality and safe learning environment which promotes good behaviour. They will ensure that students are listened to and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

Parent/carers, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Head of Year immediately. Parent/carers have a responsibility to support the Academy's Anti-bullying Policy by actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the Academy and this expectation of support is outlined in the Home-School Agreement

Students will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the Academy's anti-bullying policy, its procedures and the rationale behind them. All students have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences. Students are encouraged to 'call out' any and all inappropriate or unpleasant behaviour.

Signs to be aware of are:

- Early signs of distress
- Deterioration of work
- Unnecessary appointments with the Medical Welfare Officer
- Isolation
- A desire to remain with adults
- Erratic attendance or punctuality
- Truancy

- Marked changes in personality

It is important that ALL incidents of bullying are taken seriously and are dealt with sensitively and effectively. If there is any doubt at all, staff should seek support from a HoY or a member of the LG.

Help Organisations

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0207 354 8321
Children's Legal Centre	01206 873820
Kidscape	0207 730 3300
Parentline Plus	08088 002222
Youth Access	0208 772 9900