



ACORN FREE SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of Issue: March 2017

Date of Review:

Aims of the Policy

This policy has been written with reference to 'Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, June 2013.'

This document details how it aims to prevent and tackle bullying within the Acorn Free School. It is important that this policy is seen as being part of the whole school policy on the management of behaviour, safeguarding and the welfare of students.

At the Acorn Free School our priority is to create an ethos where pupils treat each other with respect and care. The values of our school and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others will be reinforced continually through our ethos and curriculum. Any form of bullying behaviour will not be tolerated, but this policy is not about punishing: it is about changing attitudes and encouraging respect for each other. It is about acknowledging everyone's right to feel safe, secure and happy and equally their responsibility to ensure the safety and happiness of others

The aims of the policy are

- To ensure that all children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied
- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously, and that bullying will not be tolerated
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying with the Acorn Free School
- To support everyone in their actions to identify and protect those who may be bullied
- To promote an environment where children feel they can trust and tell an adult if they are being bullied or that they know that bullying is taking place
- To promote positive attitudes and values between pupils
- To ensure all staff are aware of their duty of care over those in their charge and the need to be alert to the signs of bullying

Statutory Requirements

There are a number of statutory obligations with regard to behaviour which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents

gives headteachers the ability to discipline pupils for poor behaviour even when the pupil is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.

In addition the Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires schools to have due regard to the need to:

eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act

advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Schools are required to comply with the new Equality Duty.

The Act also makes it unlawful for a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the designated safeguarding officer will report their concerns to Lincolnshire Children's Services.

What is Bullying (including definition, signs and symptoms, roles)

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally (Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies DFE 2011 p.4)

At the Acorn Free School we recognise that there is no 'hierarchy' of bullying – all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. We understand that all children have disagreements with each other and friends fall out for a time. This is not usually bullying. At the Acorn Free School we recognise that bullying can take a variety of form but is usually based around discrimination. This is when a person or a group of people are treated differently because of a perceived difference and/or prejudice. These differences can be any range of things for example; race, educational achievement, height, sexuality, weight, accent, gender or name.

Types of bullying

- **Racist, religious and cultural bullying.**
Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures. The Race Relations Act 1976 states that schools and governing bodies have a duty to ensure that students do not face any form of racial discrimination, including attacks and harassment.
- **Sexual.**
Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments
- **Homophobic.**
Any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males or bisexual or those perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- **Abuse of the vulnerable.**

For example, children with physical disabilities, on the autism spectrum, or with special educational needs. Bullying also occurs to children who are carers or children who have suffered a death in the family. The abuse may be physical or verbal.

- **Emotional and Physical bullying.**

Instances of physical harm such as hitting, kicking and punching are more easily detected than emotional bullying. This would take the form of ridicule and exclusion, taunting, persistent verbal comments and remarks. Emotional bullying appears to be more common than physical violence and it can also be more difficult to cope with or prove.

- **Cyber bullying.**

New methods have also emerged relating to cyber bullying - texting, cruel photos from mobile phones, emails and web-based attacks are increasingly prevalent.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- does not want to come to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens self-harm
- regularly feels ill in the morning
- has possessions going missing or being damaged
- has unexplained bruises or marks
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- changes his or her usual routine

All staff should be aware of these possibilities (which may indicate other problems as well as bullying) and report promptly to the designated safeguarding officer

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

At the Acorn Free School we recognise that our response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. We will work proactively with the whole school community to ensure that robust preventative measures are in place. The prevention of bullying is an intrinsic part of the ethos of the Acorn Free School and include

- Ensuring that all staff, students and parents are aware of behaviour which is considered to be bullying. This will be part of the process of induction for all pupils
- Regular supervision of areas of the school where there might be particular opportunities for bullying to occur.
- Participating in national anti-bullying week annually in November and using the resources and teaching strategies throughout the academic year
- Being observant of pupils and any changes in their behaviour
- Talking to pupils and gaining their trust through positive relationships, making it easier for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured they are listened to and their concerns will be acted upon
- Openly discussing and incorporating into teaching the differences between people that could motivate bullying such as ethnicity, gender or sexuality

- Raising awareness of bullying through the PSHE curriculum, school assemblies and delivery of SEAL materials
- Working with additional agencies to support the curriculum delivery around anti-bullying such as the NSPCC and the police
- Delivery of the e-safety curriculum to all pupils

Procedures to be followed by the school when bullying is suspected.

When a bullying incident is reported, those accused of bullying and witnesses of the incident will be invited to describe verbally to a member of staff what has taken place and this will be recorded. The student will also have the chance to write down their account of what has taken place.

Bullying incidents will be recorded by the member of staff on the bullying incident form for future reference and copies of all documentation to do with specific incidents will be filed in the student files. The case will be referred to the headteacher for decision making about future actions

If a student either admits to bullying or it can be proved beyond reasonable doubt that they have taken part in this behaviour then the following methods and sanctions can be used.

- The incident will be reported to their parents and partner school and appropriate action will be agreed
- A restorative justice package may be used to ensure that issues are resolved
- Social time at break and lunchtimes or enrichment times may be removed
- Involvement of the police or external agencies if deemed appropriate

Sanctions need to be applied fairly and consistently and reasonably taking account of any special needs the pupil may have.

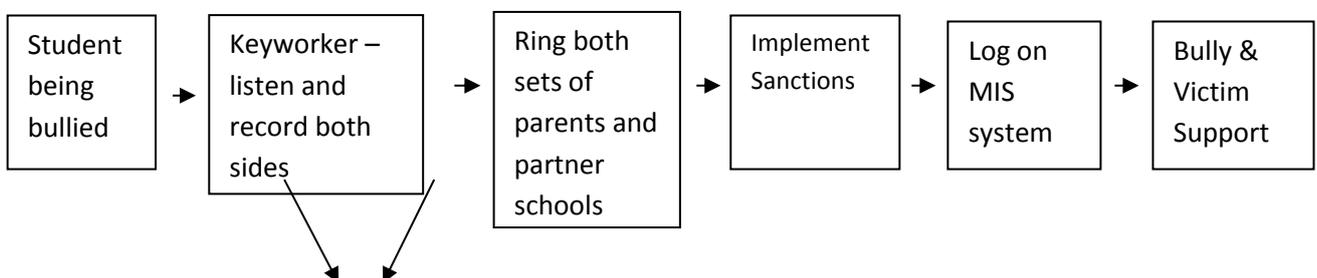
Once the bullying incident has been resolved, and the victim of the bullying considers the matter closed, referral to an outside agency may be made and a support programme will be put in place for the person who did the bullying. The school recognises that people who bully have often been victims themselves.

Support for the victim

The victim of bullying will be supported in a number of ways which will serve to reassure the pupil that there will not be a recurrence

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with a member of staff
- By offering continued support through the pastoral system
- Referral to outside agencies as deemed appropriate or referral to Children’s Services

Managing the process



Headteacher for immediate action
(to report to Governors termly)

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and the following information will inform our future policy

- A student survey will be carried out termly
- Incidences of bullying will be monitored regularly and recorded on the incident reporting form so that the school can respond in an appropriate way and report cases to Children's Services if required in line with the policy.
- Termly report to Governors detailing the number of recorded incidents and action taken