



The Birley Academy

A L.E.A.D. Academy

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*L.E.A.D. Academy Trust
2024/25*

POLICY/PROCEDURE MANAGEMENT LOG

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Introduction

1. The educational aim of The Birley Academy is to provide a **high-quality education** that allows every young person to **thrive** and **reach their potential**.
2. We try to ensure that all young people in our care:
 - can access and enjoy learning through a broad and creative curriculum; they are stretched and challenged and are taught by high quality, well-trained staff.
 - are inspired and encouraged to achieve their very best; to gain the experience, skills, qualities, and qualifications they need to be successful now and in the future.
 - have the opportunity to widen their life experiences further by engaging in at least one extra-curricular/enrichment activity or event.
 - receive support to develop their physical and mental health and well-being.
3. We achieve this by:
 - Establishing high standards in all aspects of academy life for our students through the expertise of teachers, a variety of teaching methods sensitive to the needs of the individual and offering a rich and varied curriculum.
 - Providing effective pastoral support and education which is sensitive to the needs and communities in which we work, using expertise and skill from our staff and external practitioners as needed.
 - Encouraging everyone to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, show empathy, compassion, and tolerance to others; and be respectful.
 - Ensuring that all students and particularly those who may be vulnerable to exclusion are supported to develop friendship groups.
 - Affording opportunities for new experiences and challenges in areas including sport, music, drama and foreign travel so that students can explore and become familiar with other cultures and opportunities.

Aims

4. **The aims of this protocol and our anti-bullying strategies are:**
 - To prevent occurrences of bullying at The Birley Academy
 - To ensure that all stakeholders understand what bullying is and how it is dealt with.
 - To create a positive and safe learning environment for all.
 - To develop individual's self-esteem and respect for others.
 - To have a rapid response to incidents of bullying, all allegations of bullying are taken seriously.
 5. To deal with bullying by tailoring a personalised package of student support for mediation and intervention; to include, what/how appropriate sanctions are applied.
 6. To ensure incidents of bullying are reported by specific categories and appropriate education is put in place in response to these.
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Objectives

7. Our objectives, through implementing this protocol throughout life at our academy are:
- To identify bullying and accept that it is a problem which can occur in any setting where people are brought together.
 - To be clear to all what is meant by the term 'bullying'.
 - To establish clear procedures for the course of action to be taken in respect to bullying incidents.
 - To create safe conditions for children which are built upon mutual respect, co-operation, and equal opportunities.
 - To establish that an important part of being valued for children is being listened to, believed and appropriate considered action taking place.
 - To have clear procedures, known and understood by all, including a system by which discrepancies can be dealt with and reviewed.

Definition of Bullying

“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 cyberspace.”

Definition taken from the Anti-Bullying Alliance

8. Bullying takes many forms. These are described below:

Emotional	Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force.
Physical	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference.
Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats. Ridiculing an individual.
Cyber	All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology. Appendix 2 provides further information on cyber bullying.

9. Examples of bullying against targeted groups include:

- **Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti, or gestures.
- **Sexual orientation** – offensive behaviour because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality including homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic abuse.
- **Sexist** – offensive name calling, misogynistic behaviour.
- **Disablist** – offensive name calling, laughing, not supporting or excluding.
- **Religion** – derogatory remarks about a person’s religious belief.

10. Bullying can take place inside or outside of academy life. For clarity, this protocol extends to bullying that happens off academy premises, but is linked to the academy, as well as within the academy day.
11. In addition to our procedures for dealing with bullying, the academy will seek police advice where they believe a hate crime has been or could be committed.

The frequency of bullying

12. Bullying can take place several times a week or day. It can go on for months and even years. There is recognition that bullying occurs often beyond the realm of an academy but has manifestations in an academy.
13. We have an expectation of parents and carers that they should be supportive in the process of eliminating any form of bullying.

The severity of bullying

14. Bullying ranges from horseplay, tomfoolery or 'banter' to vicious assault.
15. We recognise that bullying can be extremely subtle and therefore difficult to deal with.

Direct and indirect bullying

16. It is important to distinguish the difference, i.e. between those who are bullies and victims, and the larger group of students who are onlookers. Sometimes the bullies operate in secret places, but often they feel quite confident that no one will stop them, and they bully others in public. The onlookers are then part of the bullying.

Child on Child abuse

17. Bullying will not be dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' and staff are aware that there is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying or sexual experimentation. This is a matter for professional judgement.
18. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:
19. There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned.
20. The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children.
21. There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.
22. If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused. Appendix 3 details our Academy approach to child-on-child abuse.

Recording bullying

23. It is widely recognised that there is a vast range of types of bullying and varying degrees of severity. It is often difficult to detect more subtle types of bullying which may not be obvious or overt. However, as in all matters relating to standards and expectations, what follows rests on the professional judgement of all colleagues to exercise that judgement as and where it is felt appropriate and necessary.
24. Staff should liaise with key individuals starting with the student's Head of Year or Deputy Head of Year. The Head of Year or Deputy Head of Year will also ensure that the Deputy Headteacher (behaviour and attitudes) and the Headteacher are informed.
25. This person will be the key liaison with students, parents and staff; ensuring all parties are aware of the progress/outcome of the investigation and when appropriate the sanction and intervention applied to the student(s) involved.
26. The Deputy Headteacher will have oversight of bullying issues through the weekly briefing session with the pastoral team.
27. Incidents of bullying will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team on a half-termly basis and broken down into the following categories:
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Verbal
 - Cyber
 - Sexual orientation – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying
 - Racial
 - Sexist
 - Disablist
 - Religious

Curriculum, education and support

28. Our Anti-Bullying protocol is communicated to staff and students in a range of different methods through day-to-day academy life. These methods include:
 - **Education and support** in issues regarding bullying, methods of dealing with bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
 - **Themed assemblies**, with follow up work in tutor groups. These may be led by students, as well as staff.
 - **Focussed weeks and programmes of work** within the tutor system to focus on national campaigns, for example, Black History month, e-Safety week, anti-bullying week. In addition, to follow up high profile or relevant news stories about bullying or harassment issues, these will be discussed in tutor periods.
 - **Personal Development**, citizenship and/or PSHE inputs will cover relationships and friendships; teaching students how to manage their relationships with others constructively as well as in lower academy drama lessons.
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- **Staff will encourage student co-operation** and the development of interpersonal skills by group work and pair work within teaching methodology. Sport and PE teachers are particularly effective at promoting teamwork. Students will be allocated to groups selected by the teacher, when appropriate, and these will be changed at regular intervals to allow students more contact with a wider circle of students in their year group.
- **Potential victims** of bullying should be drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them. This should be done in a discreet and sensitive manner.
- **Opportunities to extend friendship groups** and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events such as drama productions, house (or equivalent) events, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, concerts, charity and social events and also by involvement in enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

Pastoral support

29. Students have access to a range of support to help them recognise, deal with and report bullying issues:

- The class teacher or form tutor, Deputy Head of Year, Head of Year or pastoral staff will provide a one-to-one opportunity for students to talk through relationship difficulties.
- The academy councils will provide an opportunity for students to suggest improvements to aspects of academy life.
- We are seeking to train student leaders as anti-bullying ambassadors, so they are available to act as personal mentors on request.

Expectations and guidance

30. Staff **watch out for early signs of distress** in students, for example,

- Deterioration of work.
- Spurious illness.
- Isolation or the desire to remain with adults.
- Erratic attendance and punctuality. - Internal truancy.

31. This **behaviour may be a warning of other problems**, but it may be indicative of bullying.

32. **Listen carefully** and record all incidents as per protocol.

33. **Offer the victim and the bully support** and help by putting our academy procedures into operation. If the victim discloses anything you deem to be a welfare or safeguarding issue, then disclose this information immediately to a member of the safeguarding team (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more detail).

34. **Students**, in general:

- As a member of The Birley Academy, we expect you not to put up with any forms of bullying behaviour.
 - Adults and students will work together to stop bullying.
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- When someone is being bullied or in distress, inform an adult immediately, of any form of bullying behaviour.
- Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bullying.
- Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends.
- Only accept people who do not bully others. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.
- Informing is not telling tales.

35. Parents and carers should watch for the early signs highlighted above in your child, if you have concerns contact the academy.

36. Parents/carers should know:

- The academy expectations of the parent or carer responsibility.
- Parents may have to come into the academy to discuss issues.
- That our academy takes the issue seriously and will always deal with any parent or student's concerns.

Appendix 1 – Procedures when dealing with bullying.

Staff guidance

- This guidance provides general advice. Each incident will be dealt with individually dependant on the severity, the students involved and any relevant circumstances. It also provides an outline of the steps that could be taken when there are instances of bullying.
- If bullying is reported, or if a member of staff notices a bullying incident:
- For serious incidents of bullying, staff will inform the Head of Year, Deputy Head of Year (or equivalent) and, if appropriate, the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher. Normally, the procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.
- **For incidents, where it is deemed less serious**, these will be reported to the Deputy Head of Year (or equivalent), who should investigate the incident and inform the verbally of the outcome. Should the investigation find the incident is more serious, this will be treated as such.

1. Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately.

1. Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, for example by texting.
 2. If a student is injured, take the student immediately to First Aid trained staff for a medical opinion of the extent of the injuries. (The academy first aider will record any injuries in the medical record book).
 3. Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
 4. Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgemental at this stage.
 5. Be non-confrontational.
 6. Ask the alleged bully and the alleged victim to write down details or support them in doing so by writing down the students' exact wording. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.
 7. Ask additional witnesses/bystanders for information; preferably written.
 8. Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
 9. Listen carefully to all accounts - several students saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
 10. Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
 11. Adopt a problem-solving approach, which moves a bully on from justifying themselves. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.
 12. If the bullied student might have provoked the bullying incident, help them to understand how.
 13. Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other students.
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2. Record details of the bullying

1. Write a very brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet is needed for each student involved.
2. Place these interview sheets in the individual files of each student involved, or scan and attached to My Concern as appropriate.
3. Write a more detailed single account and attach written statements of alleged victim, alleged bully and witnesses. Full names of all involved should be included in this account and send this to the Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral).
4. Inform the parents of all parties that an investigation is being carried out and that they will be kept informed at every stage of the process.
5. Record the telephone call on the academy MIS.

3. Take appropriate action to deal with the bully.

1. If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the student to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
2. If possible, try for reconciliation and genuine apology from the student.
3. Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour. Do not however, force a face-to-face meeting. This must be the decision of the students.
4. Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
5. Prepare the student to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
6. Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken and record it on the academy MIS and MyConcern if appropriate.
7. If initial attempts to stop the bullying fail, apply an appropriate level of sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the bullying.
8. If bullying is racist, inform the Headteacher immediately.

4. Support the victim - follow up checks.

1. The Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year or class teacher should informally check in a considered and sensitive manner whether the bullying has stopped.
 2. The tutor/class teacher should check informally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.
 3. The Deputy Headteacher/Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year should check formally the week after the bullying and again during the same half term.
 4. If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places in classes and in the form room.
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5. Most bullying groups have a leader, with other students in the group being frightened of being bullied themselves.
6. Encourage the victim to be assertive.
 - Ignore the comments; pretend not to hear.
 - Walk away quickly; use body language to look determined, strong and positive.
 - Shout "No, go away" as loudly as possible.
 - Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in the academy if bullying is repeated.
7. Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups by joining an after-school club or activity.
8. Ask another student to befriend and support the victim. This may involve the formal setting up of a 'circle of friends'.
9. Discuss bullying in assemblies, in drama, in the form or PSHE, and ask the class to suggest possible solutions.
10. If bullying is about a particular issue (disability for example), mount an education programme during tutorial time; not focused on a particular child.
11. If bullying is by students from another academy, the Head of Year should telephone the relevant Head of Year/Deputy of the other academy and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation.
12. Use events such as Anti-Bullying Week to highlight the issues of bullying.

5. Sanctions

1. Sanctions to deal with bullying behaviour will be dependent on the level, seriousness and persistence of the bullying.

6. For minor/single incidents

1. An apology and assurance that the bullying will stop or a detention or a piece of extra written work or meeting with parent or a temporary exclusion from certain areas of an academy's premises.
2. In **more serious cases**, internal exclusion, off-site direction, **suspension or permanent exclusion** may be sanctioned.

Appendix 2 – Cyber bullying

Please note: this protocol should be read alongside the academy’s policies and procedures on online safety and Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Useful definition: Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming, and mobile phone. (NSPCC.org.uk)

Useful statistic: 12% of young people in the UK are affected by cyberbullying (UK Safer Internet Centre)

What we will do to protect students from cyber-bullying:

In our academy, we follow 3 steps in preventing cyber-bullying and managing any reports of cyberbullying.

STEP 1:

We discuss online bullying and bullying is discussed as part of lessons, assemblies, form time and informal conversations regularly.

STEP 2:

We understand the tools.

- If we are suspicious about someone’s communication with a child, we report to CEOP.
- If we see online child sexual abuse images or videos, we should report to the Internet Watch Foundation
- If we see content that incites hatred, we should report to True Vision
- If we want to make a complaint about an advert, television or radio programme or other type of content that we think is unsuitable for children to see or hear, we go to Ofcom.
- If we want to make a complaint about an online advertisement, then we can report this to The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

STEP 3:

We ensure that students in The Birley Academy know how to report a bullying concern.

- A student should speak to a trusted adult (member of pastoral support, for example, form tutor, Deputy Head of Year, Head of Year, Deputy or Assistant Headteacher, Headteacher).

Further advice for parents and carers:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/cyberbullying-advice-for-parents-and-carers>

Appendix 3 – Child on child abuse

Children can and sometimes do, abuse other children (sometimes referred to as child-on-child abuse). This can happen both inside and outside of academy and online (known as cyber bullying).

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Academy staff have received training in recognising the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

Staff understand, that even if there are no reports of such abuse in our academy it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Staff are aware that it is important that if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

All staff are trained to understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Staff are clear that while these may be responded to through behaviour management processes, there is also a need for this information to be shared with the DSL in order to address any underlying safeguarding concerns.

Academy staff are particularly vigilant of students with identified Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) who may be particularly vulnerable to child-on-child abuse.

Such behaviour should never be considered as ‘banter’ or part of growing up. Child on child abuse often meets the threshold for the recording and investigation of criminal offences by the Police.

Staff becoming aware of any incident of child-on-child abuse must follow the safeguarding process and Child Protection procedures, passing this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. The DSL will then assess this information and where necessary make appropriate referrals to Social Care and potentially the Police, should criminal offences be identified.

Child-on-child allegations that do not meet the threshold for police investigation will be subject of internal academy investigation by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or senior leaders at the academy. This will involve speaking to the victim and any witnesses to secure accounts of the allegation. All findings including any additional information secured, will be considered when making decisions around resolution of the allegation. Outcomes may involve application of the academy behaviour policy.

Birley Academy recognises that victims of child-on-child abuse need to be supported and with parental consent, may secure external agency support where this is deemed appropriate.

All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting child-on-child abuse, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

The Birley Academy recognises that perpetrators of child-on-child abuse may have identified unmet needs of their own and with parental consultation, may secure external agency support where this is deemed appropriate.

In certain circumstances a risk assessment may need to be carried out in order to further safeguard all individuals involved. A risk assessment should be considered if:

- The students involved are in the same class.
- The students involved are in the same year group and therefore may come into contact at break and lunch time.
- The students involved may come into contact when making their way to and from the academy.

- An incident that has been resolved and deemed low risk in the first instance is repeated.
- The incident is potentially a criminal offence.
- The incident is of a physical nature of any kind.
- In consultation with the victim/alleged victim and their parents/carers a risk assessment is deemed necessary.
- Additional information is known by the academy which is relevant to the incident.



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