



Walthamstow Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Anti-Bullying Policy



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Adopted by:	Walthamstow Academy	
Date:	September 2023	
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Role:	Principal	Chair of Governors
Review frequency:	Annually	
Review date:	September 2024	

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Introduction

Walthamstow Academy (the academy) supports the right of all members of the academy community to be free from all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Those who work or study at the academy should find it a safe place and they ought to be able to feel confident knowing that they will be protected from any form of bullying. We wish to create and maintain a caring and supportive environment at the academy by making clear that bullying will not be tolerated and that positive steps will be taken to eradicate it. We aim to create an atmosphere in which staff, parents/carers and students are encouraged to bring out into the open any incident of bullying; knowing that measures to deal with it will have the support of the whole academy community. This anti-bullying policy represents the academy's promise to address problems of bullying and do all it can to prevent them.

The aims of this policy are:

- To prevent bullying.
- To deal effectively with bullying if it occurs.
- To be an integral part of the Academy behaviour for learning policy.
- To contribute to overall Academy improvement by a safe happy learning environment conducive to raising standards.
- To ensure that all students, staff and parents are clear that we do not tolerate bullying and how it will be dealt with in school.

What is Bullying?

Our Academy definition of bullying is:

“Repeated, negative behaviour that makes others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.”

Bullying is behaviour which is hurtful to another person and can make the person who is being bullied feel lonely, upset, frightened, insecure, anxious, or helpless. Adults can be bullies as well as young people and

often without being aware. The behaviour of parents/carers and staff is therefore very important. Bullying not only affects bullies and victims but others who are around and see what is happening and witness the distress of the victim.

The following possible types of bullying fall within the scope of this policy:

- Students bullying other students.
- Staff bullying students.
- The following types of bullying do not fall within the scope of this policy:
- Students bullying staff (instances of any sort of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour towards staff are fully discussed in [our behaviour policy](#)).
- Staff bullying staff (instances of adults bullying other adults) are fully discussed in the appropriate United Learning (UL) personnel policies and can be found on the UL Hub.

Bullying is likely to be persistent, and difficult for victims to defend themselves against. It can take the form of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse, but it can also involve the marginalisation and exclusion of individuals from specific groups. The weapons of bullying are threats and fear. Some examples of behaviour which academy would classify as bullying include:

- Actual physical violence such as kicking, hitting, pushing, or the threat of violence; stealing or hiding someone else's property.
- Name-calling and hurtful remarks, including those motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of
- Race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, appearance related difference,
- Because a student is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities,
- Or said with the intention of undermining someone's self-esteem. This is becoming more prevalent with cyber bullying via email; text messages; social media (like Instagram and Snapchat) and gaming, which can include the use of images and video and prank calls.
- Open and repetitive 'teasing' in a classroom or group situation. The difference between "banter" and "bullying" is sometimes difficult to distinguish. It is the victim's perception of the seriousness of such teasing that matters in such cases.
- Attempting to humiliate or isolate someone by exclusion from a social or sporting group.
- Use of offensive nicknames or commenting about a person's race, gender identify or sexual orientation.
- Adults using sarcasm as a means of humiliating a student in front of others.
- Adults denigrating students, often by criticising them using language that is personally hurtful.

Given that anyone in the academy could be the victim or perpetrator of bullying, there is a need for a whole academy anti-bullying policy that must involve all academy staff, students, parents/carers and governors.

Anti Bullying Strategy

To prevent bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying Walthamstow Academy has a clear Antibullying strategy consisting of the following measures;

- Prevention

- Vigilance and reporting
- Acting on bullying incidents
- Recording
- Sanctions

Prevention

Given the damage being bullied can do even over short periods of time, prevention is preferable to tackling bullying when it arises. Academy staff and students will act to prevent bullying in the following ways.

1. Having a single member of the school's senior leadership team who is designated as our anti bullying coordinator. In 2023-24 this person is Niamh Martin, Assistant Principal. This role involves launching, coordinating and driving forward anti-bullying initiatives across the academy. The role also involves analysing relevant data and to evaluate the success of the academy's initiatives.
2. Having a team of student 'Anti-Bullying Ambassadors'; they are a point of contact for students if they wish to report bullying to a peer.
3. Delivering a programme of education, delivered primarily through PSHE and assemblies, that empowers our students to: celebrate diversity; understand online safety; feel confident about themselves and accept others for who they are; recognise the signs of bullying; know how to report bullying at WA and know what will be done about it if it is reported. This programme includes our own resources and those provide by a range of external organisations. Whilst the programme is primarily delivered by adults, our Anti Bullying Ambassadors deliver some sections where appropriate.
4. Using PSHE, the wider curriculum and special academy events (for example: Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week and Pride Week) to celebrate diversity and inclusion and to discourage bullying on the grounds of any protected characteristic.
5. Ensuring students are aware of the potential sanctions for bullying. These will act as a deterrent. Sanctions will vary depending on the severity of the bullying and can range from a warning and mediation to a fixed-term or permanent exclusion.
6. Providing restorative justice and then a mentoring programme for those who bully alongside any sanctions. This is to break the cycle of bullying and in recognition of the fact that bullies are often victims as well as perpetrators.
7. Carrying out staff duties with regular patrols of areas of the academy not easily observable, including playgrounds, toilets, corridors, recesses, behind buildings and other hidden corners where bullying may take place, noting any isolated students or instances of inappropriate behaviour. Such incidents will be immediately investigated if there is significant concern about a student's welfare. Incidents that are puzzling or not of urgent concern will be reported using the academy's CPOMS system.
8. Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of their responsibility to be vigilant for, and respond appropriately to, any possible bullying behaviour. Staff should refrain from any words or actions in the classroom which might be seen as an encouragement to bullying or as bullying behaviour in itself.
9. We will encourage bullies to willingly seek help themselves in changing their behaviour. This will be catalysed by educating students as to why they and their peers may find themselves bullying others.

Noticing and Reporting Bullying

The victims of bullying might choose to come forward themselves to report what is happening to them. The academy will make every effort to ensure that taking this brave step is as easy and risk free as possible.

There will be other occasions on which students will notice that their peers are being bullied. We will work to create a culture in which reporting the bullying of others is seen as a sign of good character.

Finally, there may be occasions on which staff notice the signs of bullying, we will train staff in spotting these signs and ensure they use our well-established CPOMS system to report their concerns so they can be acted on. Our steps to ensure bullying is noticed and reported include:

1. Providing as many safe ways as we can to report. A button on our website and links to secure emails from our social media sites provide on-line methods. Our safeguarding posters in school point students to a range of suitable adults. Our anti-bullying ambassadors are a way for students to report bullying to a peer rather than an adult if they wish.
2. Promoting the ways in which students can report bullying through tutor time, assemblies, displays in school and our online presence.
3. Providing reassurance to students that reporting is the right thing to do in all circumstances. We are educating students on the idea of being an 'upstander' rather than a 'bystander' and on the idea that reporting is a positive step for everyone involved in bullying (including the bully) during our PSHE programme.
4. We will publicise details of organisations (for example, Childline) outside the academy community who can be contacted if victims of bullies prefer to talk to someone who is independent.
5. Every member of staff at the academy will be expected to look for signs of bullying as part of their academic and pastoral roles and responsibilities. Staff will be particularly alert to, and report the following behaviours via the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS):
 - Patterns of attendance.
 - Lateness to academy or to lessons.
 - Sickness in academy.
 - How new students are received by others.
 - Cuts and bruises.
 - Torn clothes.
 - Missing possessions.
 - Sudden changes in mood.
 - Sudden changes in friendship groups.
 - Increased levels of anxiety.
 - Social isolation.
 - Comments overheard during lessons or in the playground.
 - Information about unusual or worrying online activity, for example searches that relate to depression, self-harm or violence towards others.
 - Any comments made by students about threats or insults they have received through social media.
 - Subject teachers will be suspicious of:
 - Any sudden drop in achievement
 - Instances of withdrawn behaviour.
 - They will also be mindful of unintended consequences when organising groups or teams.

Taking Action when Bullying Occurs

Every case of bullying of any kind must be followed up to ensure that:

- The facts of the matter are established within the balance of probabilities.
- The bullying behaviour stops and is not repeated.
- The victim feels safe and is confident that the behaviour has now stopped.
- The bully receives a sanction where appropriate and this sanction correlates to the seriousness of the bullying.
- The bully receives education and support to assist them in stopping bullying behaviour.

In investigating the facts of the matter, it is vital that the wellbeing and safety of anyone involved in reporting the incident (whether that is the victim, a peer or a member of staff) are of paramount importance. It is entirely appropriate for statements to be given anonymously and for the source of information to be kept confidential, particularly in the early stages of an investigation.

Once the incident has been investigated and the facts are clear, it is important to explore the feelings of both the victim and the bully. If it is judged appropriate, all parties will be brought together to explore ways of resolving the situation, particularly in making the bully come to terms with the effect of his/her behaviour.

Sanctions against the bully will be considered, especially if the bullying is severe. These will range from a centralised detention, temporary or permanent exclusion from the academy. The behaviour should be recorded on CPOMS and the sanction recorded on Arbor. The bullying incident will be recorded on the Academy bullying log by the Assistant Principal. The situation must then be followed up regularly by those dealing with it.

Recording Bullying

Initial reports of bullying might be made via email, verbally and via the CPOMS system. Once an incident has been investigated from its initial report, it is updated with all the available information to CPOMS.

The academy bullying record will be kept by the Assistant Principal (Niamh Martin). This logs details of all incidents in detail and also records the nature of bullying that has occurred.

Recorded incidents are analysed so that we can gain intelligence about individuals and groups who may be at risk of bullying or being bullied, track progress towards a reduction in bullying and reward positive actions where students or others have reported bullying. This analysis will take place at least once a half term and be conducted by Niamh Martin.

Bullying Outside of Academy Premises

The academy has the power to investigate and deal with bullying that occurs off the academy premises. We will consider using this power where it clearly falls within the scope of this policy described on page 2.

Information about our use of sanctions in relation to behaviour outside of academy premises can be found within our [behaviour policy](#).

Reporting bullying by a member of staff

We prevent bullying of students by members of staff through our recruitment processes, our staff training programme and our regular monitoring of the effectiveness of all staff in their roles. In the rare instance that a student is bullied by a member of staff then it is important that they feel able to come forward with a complaint, knowing that it will be dealt with fairly and effectively. As with all types of bullying, students should feel able to report an instance where they are bullied by an adult to any other adult in the academy. They may also choose to disclose information to a parent/carer or other trusted adult outside the academy. In either case, the adult who receives this disclosure should immediately pass this information to the DSL or the Principal. The investigation and any subsequent action are described in our [safeguarding policy](#) and in the UL staff disciplinary code (on the UL policy hub).

If the DSL or Principal are accused of bullying, then the issue can be reported to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer). Details of how to contact them are in our Safeguarding Policy.

Information for parents/carers.

The academy provides this policy to parents/carers of every student attending the academy through our website. Parent/carers are encouraged to contact the academy immediately if they think their child is being bullied and give details including who, what, where and when.

Parents/carers must not feel that they are being a nuisance; they must be made welcome and made to feel confident that the academy will sort the problem out with them and that it will be dealt with confidentially.

Staff and Student Roles and Responsibilities

Students	Report any bullying or suspicious activity they experience or witness immediately. Either through the website or to a trusted adult in the academy. Embody the academy values of respect, determination and ambition in all that they do.
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All Staff	<p>Be alert to signs of bullying, including a change of pattern in behaviour (including friendship groups), attendance, punctuality, achievement, contributions in lessons and around the academy.</p> <p>Be available for students to talk through issues with outside lesson time.</p> <p>Be mindful of seating plans, and groupings in lessons and activities that might lead to bullying.</p> <p>Be proactive on all duties and noticing any students who seem isolated or withdrawn.</p> <p>Pass on concerns or issues immediately to the relevant pastoral leader, using CPOMS as the main method of such communication.</p> <p>Use the behaviour policy consistently at all times.</p> <p>Use any opportunity to reinforce expectations based on our academy values.</p>
Heads of Year	<p>Responsible for gathering feedback from students about personal safety and bullying, in order to refine policy and practice.</p> <p>Could be requested to investigate an incident of bullying .</p>
Pastoral Team	<p>Record all incidents of bullying on CPOMS and investigate incidents of bullying.</p> <p>Organise mediation and mentoring where needed.</p>
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Assistant Principal	<p>Monitor Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) to ensure all incidents that might be signs of bullying are followed up.</p>
Assistant Principal in charge of Anti-bullying	<p>Review the Anti-Bullying Policy annually.</p>
Assistant Principal in charge of Anti-bullying	<p>Monitor, review and respond to patterns in incidents relating to bullying and communicate to the Senior Leadership Team at least annually.</p>
The Principal	<p>Coordinates any investigation into bullying by a member of staff.</p>
IT staff	<p>Monitor IT usage and alert the DSL to possible instances of the signs of bullying or being bullied through school IT.</p>
Vice Principal and Assistant DSL	<p>Responsible for ensuring the relevant PSHE curriculum areas are taught in class, through assemblies and through the wider curriculum offer</p>

Parents/carers	<p>Notice any signs that a child might be subject to bullying. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly feeling unwell in the morning, and being reluctant to go to school - money or possessions going missing - asking for more pocket money for no particular reason - unexplained cuts or bruises - torn clothes - increased levels of anxiety. - a sudden and sustained change in behaviour for example, becoming tearful, bad tempered or unhappy, a change in sleeping patterns - a change in friendship groups, or a reluctance to talk about friends - unusual or worrying online activity, for example searches that relate to depression, self-harm or violence towards others <p>Report any suspicion of bullying to academy staff immediately.</p>
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Links to Other Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- [Admissions policy](#)
- [Behaviour policy](#)
- [Equal Opportunities statement](#)
- [Exclusions policy](#)
- [Extremism and anti-radicalisation of students policy](#)
- [Safeguarding policy](#)
- [SEND policy](#)

This policy is compliant with the following legal frameworks and statutory guidance:

- [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Section 89 of 2006 Education Act](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Department for Education 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff' \(2014\)](#)
- [Department for Education 'Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff' \(2022\)](#)
- [Department for Education 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(2017\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children \(2018\)](#)

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.