Anti-Bullying Policy

Adopted by:	Walthamstow Academy	
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Signed off by:	Emma Skae	Geoff Skewes
Role:	Principal	Chair of Governors
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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 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.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour which is meant to be deliberately 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.

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.

Links to Other Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- [Acceptable Use of ICT policy](#)
- [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
  http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents
- Children Act 1989 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents
- Section 89 of 2006 Education Act http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89
- Equality Act 2010 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
- [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' (2016)](#)

- [Department for Education 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 (2020)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children (2020)](#)

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.

Signs of bullying

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.

The academy's CPOMS system will be used to record observations by staff so that the safeguarding team can spot patterns and enact intervention where necessary. It is worth noting that the above behaviours can also be signs of involvement in extremism or gang activity, or of domestic issues so will be investigated fully and with an open mind by the safeguarding team or Head of Year (depending on who the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL) delegates the action to on CPOMS).

Academy staff are expected to be proactive in looking for signs of bullying, rather than expecting bullying to be reported directly to them.

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**.

Preventing Bullying

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.

- Staff, students and parents/carers will all be involved in this process of creating and supporting a whole academy anti-bullying culture. This culture will be based on our core values of respect, determination and ambition. We will encourage students to talk openly and regularly about the issue within tutor groups, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Relationships Education (PSHE) and in direct meetings with tutors and teachers. We will plan for measures such as this in our PSHE schemes of work.

- We will address the issues relating to bullying that arise through students' use of social media by educating students about safe and respectful online presence.

- We will ensure the PSHE curriculum addresses the challenges of peer relationships and equips students with a range of tools to negotiate conflict successfully.

- We will use 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.

- We will ensure all students are aware of the mechanisms through which they can report bullying. The ease with which it can be reported will act as a deterrent to those who bully.

- We will ensure 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.

- We will provide mediation 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.

- Staff carrying out duties will regularly patrol areas of the academy not easily observable, including playgrounds, toilets, corridors, recesses, behind buildings and other hidden corners where bullying may take place, and note 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.

- The Junior Leadership Team will address the issue of bullying on a termly basis and will feedback directly to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on their findings.

- The SLT member responsible for pastoral care (Dan Seed) will act as the anti-bullying coordinator with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of this anti-bullying policy, chairing appropriate meetings, encouraging anti-bullying initiatives amongst students (for example, poster campaigns, surveys, drama, circle time and anti-bullying videos) and evaluating the policy's overall success.

- An academy bullying log will be kept by the pastoral manager (Cornel Grant). This will log all incidents in detail and also record whether they are homophobic, transphobic, or racist.

- We will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibility to be vigilant for, and respond appropriately to, any possible bullying behaviour. They 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.

- 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.

- 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.

What procedures should be followed if bullying occurs?

Every case of bullying of any kind must be followed up to ensure that the victim is given as much support as possible to prevent repetition.

Firstly, the matter and all the circumstances must be brought into the open by bringing it to the attention of someone who will do something about it. In some cases this will be another student, but it might also be a parent/carer or a member of staff - whoever the victim or witness of the bullying feels comfortable talking to.

The next stage is to make a written record of the incident, using an incident report form or other appropriate means, and give it to the appropriate Tutor, Head of Year or another member of the

pastoral team. They will investigate the incident, discover what occurred and 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 formal warning to temporary or permanent exclusion from the academy. The behaviour should be recorded on CPOMS where there are any safeguarding concerns and, in all cases, it should be recorded on the academy bullying log. The situation must then be followed up regularly by those dealing with it. Our pastoral staff work closely as a team to ensure that incidents are monitored across individual and groups of students within and across year groups. Recorded incidents will be 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. Written records will be monitored periodically by the Head of Year and the Vice Principal responsible for pastoral care (Dan Seed).

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 will provide this policy to parents/carers of every student attending the academy through our website. Parent/carers must be 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 Training and Access to Information

All teaching and support staff will be given opportunities for training in identifying bullying and ways to deal with students who bully and those being bullied, and in working with parents/carers. Staff will be fully briefed on strict procedures for managing bullying.

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.
All Staff	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. Be available for students to talk through issues with outside lesson time. Be mindful of seating plans, and groupings in lessons and activities that might lead to bullying. Be proactive on all duties and noticing any students who seem isolated or withdrawn. Pass on concerns or issues immediately to the relevant pastoral leader, using CPOMS as the main method of such communication. Use the behaviour policy consistently at all times. Use any opportunity to reinforce expectations based on our academy values.
Heads of Year	Responsible for gathering feedback from students about personal safety and bullying, in order to refine policy and practice. Could be requested to investigate an incident of bullying
Pastoral Team	Record all incidents of bullying in the log. Could be requested to investigate an incident of bullying. Organise mediation and mentoring where needed.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Monitor Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) to ensure all incidents that might be signs of bullying are followed up.
Vice Principal in charge of behaviour	Review the Anti-Bullying Policy annually.

	Monitor, review and respond to patterns in incidents relating to bullying and communicate to the Senior Leadership Team at least annually.
The Principal	Coordinates any investigation into bullying by a member of staff.
IT staff	Monitor IT usage and alert the DSL to possible instances of the signs of bullying or being bullied through school IT.
Head of Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)	Responsible for ensuring the relevant PSHE curriculum areas are taught in class, through assemblies and through the wider curriculum offer
Parents/carers	Notice any signs that a child might be subject to bullying. These could include: - 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 Report any suspicion of bullying to academy staff immediately.