



<b>Policy title</b>	Preventing Bullying Policy
<b>Written by</b>	Chris Jowett – Vice Principal
<b>Policy owner</b>	Marcus Still – Principal

<b>Status</b>	Approved
<b>Summary of change</b>	Annual review of this statutory policy

<b>Equality Impact Assessment date</b>	
<b>JCC consultation date (People policies)</b>	
<b>Approval date</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
<b>Approval authority</b>	Delegated to the Principal
<b>Review date</b>	January 2026

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Bullying hurts and no-one deserves to be bullied. In our academy we recognise that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to learning and have serious consequences on mental health. Bullying which takes place at school can have a lasting effect on a young person's life into adulthood.

1.2 Pupils who are displaying bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving.

1.3 We aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly climate for learning for all our pupils to allow them to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect, to feel welcome, secure and happy. We also aim to produce an inclusive environment for all pupils which openly discusses differences between people and celebrates diversity. We reinforce this through the celebration of our values.

1.4 We expect pupils to act safely and feel safe in the academy, including that they understand the issues relating to bullying and that they feel confident to seek support from the academy should they feel unsafe. We also want parents to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for in the academy and incidents when they do arise are dealt with promptly and well.

1.5 The academy has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying behaviour and all incidents will be treated seriously. When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern.

## 2. Aims and objectives

2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for:

- Promoting the understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour and the effects that this can have;
- Identifying clear procedures for the reporting and investigation of incidents; (logged and tracked on CPOMs)
- Ensuring consistent and appropriate sanctions are in place for those who bully;
- Ensuring support mechanisms are in place for children who are bullied and for those who bully;
- Academy monitoring of all incidents to identify both wider trends and potential safeguarding issues for individuals;
- Training and support of staff in identifying bullying behaviour and supporting children who are bullied and those who bully.

2.2 By creating this framework our objective is to tackle and prevent bullying.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1 The language used around bullying can be very emotive and can 'label' children, suggesting permanence. Instead of 'victim' say person (child) who is being bullied, and instead of 'bully' say person (child) who is using bullying behaviours/doing the bullying. In this way it is the behaviours and roles that are being labelled, not the children.
- 3.2 Friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.
- 3.3 Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both pupils disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both children make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.
- 3.4 Bullying involves dominance of one student by another, or a group of others, is premeditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour. It is behaviour which is intended to hurt, threaten or otherwise intimidate another person and can result in pain and distress to the victim in a physical or mental form.
- 3.5 Bullying is therefore:
- Deliberately hurtful;
  - Repeated, often over a period of time;
  - Difficult for victims to defend themselves against.
- 3.6 It can take many forms but the main types are:
- Physical - hitting, kicking, and taking another's belongings;
  - Verbal - name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks;
  - Indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of rumours in any form;
  - Cyber – name calling, insulting others, spreading rumours or images;
  - Psychological bullying - defined as any kind of intentional and purposeful mental abuse.
- 3.7 Some forms of bullying are attacks not only on the individual, but also on the group to which the victim may belong. Within school we will pay particular attention to:
- Racial harassment and racist bullying;
  - Sexual and gender-based bullying;
  - The use of homophobic language including biphobic and transphobic references, including deadnaming;
  - Bullying of students who have special educational needs or disabilities.

3.8 Students may become involved in bullying because they:

- want to dominate others and improve their social status
- have low self-esteem
- have a lack of remorse or fail to recognise their behaviour as a problem
- feel angry or frustrated
- struggle socially
- have been the victim of bullying themselves

## 4. Preventing bullying

### 4.1 Strategies employed with our pupils

We have a creative approach towards promoting anti—bullying in our school through assemblies, themed weeks, PSHE lessons and displays. We follow the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum but also discuss friendship issues and tackle issues that arise in the playground.

At Blackthorns, we have high expectations for behaviour and promoting respect for one another. Our behaviour approach of 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' has a strong focus on treating all members of our community with respect at all times and we teach the children about the Blackthorns qualities (respect, kindness, teamwork, independence and determination) and have a clear system of behaviour steps. When dealing with behaviour incidents, we consistently refer to whether the behaviour displayed was respectful.

Through PSHE lessons, assemblies and themed weeks we promote equality and ensure prejudice is challenged and differences are celebrated. Our aim is to create a climate where it is accepted that, because bullying is wrong, it is 'OK' to tell. We promote awareness of the impact that bullying can have on children's behaviour through events such as Anti-Bullying week.

Peer mediators are used to support friendship issues within the playground and their role is given high profile through introducing them to the children in an assembly and then celebrating their impact throughout the year.

### 4.2 Cyberbullying

The ever-increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims.

Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence behaviour in school.

Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other forms of bullying.

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*

Cyberbullying can include:

- Hacking into someone's accounts / sites
- Posting prejudice / hate messages
- Impersonating someone on line
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

**When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the academy will:**

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
  - looking at use of the academy systems;
  - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
  - contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary;
  - working with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
    - Supporting with reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
    - Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance.
    - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene academy behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the academy will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
  - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
  - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;

- helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

4.2.1 We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our online safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour. Each year children are taught an online safety unit of work and this is refreshed throughout the year, including in events such as Safer Internet Day.

### **4.3 Strategies employed with our staff**

In order to support our staff in being able to effectively address incidents of bullying behaviour we provide regular training opportunities and also discuss any current situations involving children who we are concerned about.

- Weekly staff meetings enable staff to share concerns and ensure that school leaders are able to make all staff aware of any friendship issues or potential bullying situations throughout the school. This supports the process of information gathering and monitoring and also ensures that staff are vigilant when dealing with incidents involving highlighted children.
- Behaviour incidents and bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS. All new staff are trained on how to record incidents on CPOMS.
- Where incidents of alleged bullying are reported, staff are asked to discuss these with a member of SLT before recording on CPOMS so that the allegation can be logged accurately and the right course of action can be agreed to initiate the investigation of this concern.

We have a Learning Mentor and a team of trained Peer Mediators to support children as necessary. We also have many adults who have developed good relationships with a variety of children throughout the academy who can support as needed.

### **4.4 Strategies employed with our parents**

4.4.1 Parents have a responsibility to support the academy's Preventing Bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the academy community.

As an academy we work with our parents/carers to prevent bullying by providing advice and guidance on what to look out for as signs and symptoms of bullying.

#### **Signs of Bullying:**

Bullying can bring about changes in children's behaviour. Signs such as these may indicate that a child is being bullied. He / She may:

- Be unwilling to go to school
- Be frightened of the journey to / from school
- Not want to be in school
- Feel ill in the mornings
- Begin to underachieve
- Be unhappy or withdrawn
- Be aggressive or unreasonable
- Have possessions go 'missing'
- Bully other children or siblings
- Have nightmares or cry themselves to sleep

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*

- Not want to talk about their problems
- Give excuses to explain any of these things

We provide useful information for parents on preventing bullying, safe use of the internet and cyberbullying via parent information events/workshops and newsletter updates. These include signposting parents to the Anti-Bullying Alliance resources that accompany Anti-Bullying Week, as well as supporting resources from the NSPCC website and Safer Internet Day. Many of these websites and resources are outlined at the end of this policy.

## **5. Reporting bullying incidents**

Our aim is to create a climate where it is accepted that, because bullying is wrong that it is 'OK' to tell an adult. Positive relationships between children and adults are in place so that children can speak to their teachers regarding issues that may arise. We encourage children to share any concerns that they may have either verbally, through the use of worry boxes or by sharing their concerns with our peer mediators.

If concerns are raised at home, parents can contact the class teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team via the office. In addition, members of the Senior Leadership Team are a visible presence on the school gate at the beginning and end of the school day and can support parents with any concerns.

## **6. Investigating bullying incidents**

It is important to mention that the academy will take into account their responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 to consider any SEN of the child/ren using the bullying behaviours.

If an allegation of bullying is made, a record of this will be made on CPOMS using the category 'Alleged Bullying'.

We recognise that if a child raises a concern that they are being bullied then this may have taken a significant amount of courage. We therefore start from a position of acknowledging their concern, believing them, listening to them and trying to understand the situation and how this has been making them feel.

Following an allegation of bullying, we will respond quickly and will investigate incidents thoroughly by:

- Listening to the child who is affected by bullying behaviours;
- Speaking with, and listening to, the child who has been carrying out the alleged bullying behaviour;
- Speaking with, and listening to, any other children who were part of the issue or who witnessed the incidents;
- Speaking to both sets of parents/carers regarding the issues raised;
- Putting a plan in place to support the child experiencing the alleged bullying behaviours – this may involve support provided by our Learning Mentor or another key adult, Peer Mediator support on the playground, identifying a wider circle of friends who can support them in class and on the playground, identifying if there are any particular hot spots within the school where protection needs to be put in place (toilets, cloakrooms, for example), sharing the news of the incident(s) with all staff to raise awareness, reviewing previous incidents logged on CPOMS, discussing the incident with key staff members to gather their views.

As part of our commitment to achieving a swift resolution to any alleged incidents of bullying, **our investigation will be thorough and will take place over a period of no more than 3 weeks**, at which point, the bullying allegation will be classified as either founded or unfounded.

At the end of this 3-week period, a conversation will take place with the child alleged to have experienced the bullying behaviours and their parents or carers to confirm whether the bullying allegation has been deemed to be founded or unfounded.

Regardless of the outcome, continued monitoring of the situation will take place and staff will remain vigilant to any ongoing friendship issues between the children.

## **7. Responding to a bullying incident**

### **7.1 Supporting the child who has been bullied**

When a child or their parents or carers report a bullying incident, we will:

- Assure the child that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident and encourage them to talk about how they feel;
- Try to ascertain the extent of the problem and engage the child in making choices about how the matter may be resolved;
- Try to ensure that they feel safe and discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe;
- Record any incidents on CPOMS and ensure that both parties have their views listened to and recorded;
- Seek to provide the opportunity for any restoration through coaching, peer mediation and conflict resolution;
- Ask the child or their parents or carers to immediately report any further incidents to us;
- Affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our academy will persist with intervention until it does stop.

A suitable adult will then discuss the incidents with those who are alleged to have displayed bullying behaviours. If this involves more than one child then these discussions may be carried out separately. The adult will listen to each version of events. They will also talk to anyone who may have witnessed the bullying behaviours;

At this stage the adult will:

- Ensure that any discussions or incidents that form part of the investigation process are recorded on CPOMS.

Following the investigation, should the bullying allegation be founded and it is recognised that bullying behaviours have taken place, the adult will:

- Reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop;
- Advise pupils responsible for displaying bullying behaviours that we will be checking to ensure that bullying stops; and ensure that those involved in the incidents know that we have done so;
- Contact the parents of the pupils involved at an early stage;
- Follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again;
- Put in place appropriate consequences and support to ensure that the child displaying bullying behaviours is able to make a change to their behaviour;

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*



- Put in place appropriate support for the child who has experienced bullying behaviours to ensure that they feel safe and have a support network of peers and adults;
- At an appropriate time, involve both parties in identifying the solution to the situation that has emerged. We wish to create a climate where, with support, the child displaying bullying behaviours and the child experiencing bullying can meet to discuss the incidents involved. Our aim is to empower young people to take ownership in being instigators of positive social change;
- Affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied;
- Ensure that regular and thorough monitoring of the situation continues. It is important that any subsequent incidents are logged and investigated and that the frequency of these is monitored through termly behaviour analysis and regular check-ins with the class teacher, to ensure that the measures put in place are having a positive impact.

## **7.2 Supporting the child using the bullying behaviours**

Children need to know that bullying behaviours are unacceptable and therefore it is important that the child using bullying behaviours is given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour choices.

A range of strategies, including Comic strip conversations, may be used to unpick incidents so that children can empathise with how the other child may be feeling.

When unpicking bullying incidents, it is important to recognize that there are often two sides to a situation as this will enable an effective resolution to be reached. It is important that the child understands how they will be supported in changing their behaviour towards others.

Continued monitoring will take place to ensure that bullying does not reoccur. This will also provide an opportunity to positively reinforce the changes that have been made by the child who had displayed bullying behaviours.

## **7.3 Consequences**

Whilst promoting a positive ethos, we recognise the need for an effective series of strategies and consequences that identify, and address, bullying behaviour. Consequences may be disciplinary or educational in their nature but are always intended to make the bullying behaviour stop at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sometimes these may be employed immediately after an incident, but in other cases an investigation will precede the implementation of consequences. Our guidelines when providing children with consequences are:

- To remind children of appropriate behaviour at the earliest opportunity;
- Admonishment is in a spirit of disappointment, rather than anger;
- Provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion;
- Appropriate consequences are applied. These may be disciplinary in nature (miss playtimes, spend time away from their class for example) or they may be educational (identifying ways to restore the relationship, identifying ways to change their behaviour, finding ways to apologise, for example);
- Parents/carers are kept informed.

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*

## **8. Bullying outside of academy premises**

- 8.1 Principals have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the academy premises. This can relate to any bullying incident occurring anywhere off the academy premises such as on public transport or on the way to or from the academy.
- 8.2 The bullying may be done by students from our own Academy, by students from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a student or parent tells us of bullying outside of the Academy premises we will, as appropriate:
- Talk to students about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of the Academy;
  - Talk to the Principal of another school whose students are bullying;
  - Talk to the transport company about bullying on buses;
  - Use community links to set up restorative meetings;
  - Talk to the police and community team to gain external help and advice.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

- 9.1 The Local Board have defined responsibilities for the monitoring of pupil/student welfare and receive regular reports on racist and homophobic incidents through the termly Principal's report.
- 9.2 Bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS and discussed with Senior Leaders in the academy. Behaviour incidents are regularly analysed and situations are monitored. Trends in behaviour are analysed and areas of action are identified across the academy. The aim is to have a clear picture of bullying incidents through effective record keeping.

## **10. Legislation and associated policies**

### **10.1 Legislation**

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
  - The Equality Act 2010
  - Public Sector Equality Duty
  - Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014
  - Children Act 1989
- 10.2 This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans including:
- Trust ICT Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
  - Staff Code of conduct
  - Academy Behaviour policy
  - Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
  - Academy Online Safety policy
  - Curriculum policies, such as: Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
  - Trust Data Protection policy

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*

- Trust Photography and image sharing policy
- Trust Social Media policy
- Trust Complaints policy

## 11. Further sources of information

11.1 The following organisations provide support for schools and parents dealing with specific bullying issues including the social, mental or emotional affects caused by bullying.

[The Anti-Bullying Alliance \(ABA\)](#): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

The ABA has also put together a fact sheet outlining the range of support that is available to schools and young people from the anti-bullying sector which can be accessed [here](#).

[The Diana Award](#): Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.

[Kidscape](#): Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

[Restorative Justice Council](#): Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

## Cyber-bullying and online safety

[ChildNet International](#): Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves. Website specifically includes new [cyberbullying guidance and a practical PSHE toolkit](#) for schools.

[Digizen](#): provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.

[Internet Matters](#): provides help to keep children safe in the digital world.

[Think U Know](#): resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.

[The UK Council for Child Internet Safety \(UKCCIS\)](#) has produced a range of resources for schools, colleges and parents about how to keep children safe online, this includes advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of 'sexting.'

## LGBT

[Barnardos](#): through its LGBTQ Hub, offers guidance to young people, parents and teachers on how to support LGBT students and tackle LGBT prejudice-based bullying

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*

[EACH](#): (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia): provides a national freephone Actionline for targets of homophobic or transphobic bullying and training to schools on sexual orientation, gender identity matters and cyberhomophobia.

[Metro Charity](#): an equality and diversity charity, providing health, community and youth services across London, the South East, national and international projects. Metro works with anyone experiencing issues related to gender, sexuality, diversity or identity

[Proud Trust](#): helps young people empower themselves to make a positive change for themselves and their communities through youth groups, peer support, delivering of training and events, campaigns, undertaking research and creating resources.

[Schools Out](#): Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education.

[Stonewall](#): An LGBT equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGBT bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

## **SEND**

[Mencap](#): Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

[Changing Faces](#): Provide online resources and training to schools on bullying because of physical difference.

[Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities](#): Advice provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on developing effective anti-bullying practice.

[Anti-bullying Alliance SEND programme of resources](#): Advice provided by the Anti-bullying Alliance for school staff and parents on issues related to SEND and bullying.

[Information, Advice and Support Service Network](#): Every Local area has an information, advice and support service, providing information, advice and support to disabled children and young people, and those with SEN, and their parents.

## **Mental health**

[MindEd](#): Provides a free online training tool for adults that is also available to schools. It can be used to help school staff learn more about children and young peoples mental health problems. It provides simple, clear guidance on mental health and includes information on identifying, understanding and supporting children who are bullied.

[PSHE Association](#) – [guidance and lesson plans](#) on improving the teaching of mental health issues

## **Race, religion and nationality**

[Anne Frank Trust](#): Runs a schools project to teach young people about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination, and cultural diversity.

*Inspiring our children and staff to flourish and achieve their best*

[Educate Against Hate](#): provides teachers, parents and school leaders practical advice and information on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.

[Show Racism the Red Card](#): Provide resources and workshops for schools to educate young people, often using the high profile of football, about racism.

[Kick It Out](#): Uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for schools.

[Tell MAMA](#): Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks (MAMA) allows people from across England to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse, MAMA can also refer victims for support through partner agencies.

[Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group](#): Independent members of this group are representatives from the Muslim community and will assist and advice on all relevant issues.

*Please note that internal servers may block access to some of these sites. Schools wishing to access these materials may need to adjust their settings*

### **Sexual harassment and sexual bullying**

[Ending Violence Against Women and Girls \(EVAW\): A Guide for Schools](#). This guide from the End Violence Against Women Coalition sets out the different forms of abuse to support education staff to understand violence and abuse of girls, warning signs to look for, and how to get your whole school working towards preventing abuse.

[Disrespect No Body](#): a Home Office led campaign which helps young people understand what a healthy relationship is. This website includes teaching materials to be used in the classroom.

[Anti-bullying Alliance](#): advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying