



## ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Review Date:	May 2008	Last review date:	N/A
Policy Adopted:	August 2007	Next review date:	TBD

**This Policy incorporates the Academy's vision and core values.**

### Introduction

It is our belief that students have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. This is one of the key outcomes of Every Child Matters: Staying Safe. We also know that a bullied child will not be enjoying and achieving. This policy takes account of the DfES policy: *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (DfES 0064/2000).

The Academy will prevent bullying by raising awareness of bullying among students, parents/carers and staff. It deals with the problem when it occurs through a well-ordered process.

We define bullying as any behaviour imposed on another over time which hurts, threatens, intimidates, frightens or undermines an individual's sense of worth.

### Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is:

- to define bullying
- to make clear support systems for victims to raise their self esteem and bullies to change their behaviour
- to support students, parents/carers and staff in dealing with bullying issues
- to ensure a safe and welcoming Academy environment
- to encourage respect for self and others so that everyone feels valued within the Academy community
- to set out procedures to deal with incidents in an appropriate manner
- to support the rights and responsibilities of all in Spires Academy.

### Definition of harassment & bullying:

Harassment:

- Harassment can be defined as inappropriate behaviour, actions, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence
- Behaviour that is acceptable to one individual may not be acceptable to another
- Examples of sexual and sexual orientation-related harassment include:
  - requests for sexual favours
  - speculation about an individual's private life and sexual activities
  - threatened or sexual violence
  - threat of dismissal, loss of promotion etc. for refusal of sexual favours.
  - insensitive jokes and lewd comments
  - leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive or insulting gestures.
  - unnecessary bodily contact
  - displays of sexually offensive material
  - sending salacious, offensive or abusive messages or pictures via internal or external mail, facsimile or email
  - exclusion from normal workplace conversation or social events, i.e. being "frozen out".



- Examples of racial harassment include:
  - abusive language and racist jokes
  - racial name-calling
  - the display or circulation of racially offensive written or visual material, including graffiti
  - sending offensive or abusive messages or pictures via internal or external mail, facsimile or email
  - physical threats, assault and insulting behaviour or gestures
  - open hostility
  - unfair allocation of work and responsibilities
  - exclusion from normal workplace conversation or social events, i.e. being “frozen out”
  - bantering.

Bullying:

- Bullying behaviour goes beyond management’s right to issue reasonable instructions. It applies to the use of persistent offensive tactics that threaten, intimidate or humiliate employees causing fear, distress, vulnerability, loss of self-confidence and stress-related illness.

Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- shouting, use of foul language and personal abuse
- threatening/disorderly behaviour or physical assault
- teasing, humiliating or criticising staff in public
- imposing unrealistic targets or deadlines
- imposing excessive workloads
- removing employees’ responsibilities and giving them menial tasks
- excluding individuals from meetings and decision-making
- ostracising or openly ignoring someone
- excessively close daily supervision
- rude or intimidating messages via email, text etc
- withholding necessary information or supplying incorrect information
- blocking holiday requests, promotion or training and development opportunities.

Bullying is normally of a persistent nature, wearing down the individual concerned.

The above lists are not intended to describe all possible actions of a bully. Other acts may come within the general definition of harassment and bullying and therefore constitute gross misconduct and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

### **Guidelines and Procedures**

It is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy community to stop bullying happening.

Head of School:

- ensure that everyone knows what bullying is and that it is taken seriously
- ensure that colleagues take emotional, verbal and physical bullying seriously. Make students aware that sexual, physical and racial bullying is likely to result in exclusion and possible police involvement
- encourage students and parents to inform the School of issues
- ensure that the School has the resources to offer extensive support to both bullies and their victims
- take responsibility for dealing with all serious issues and incidents.

Strategic Leadership Team:

- be visible around the site and alert to signs of bullying
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- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are recorded on internal report forms and that appropriate action has/is being taken
- inform/involve parents in every bullying situation. Make them aware of the resources the Academy has to support both bullies and their victims
- identify students in need of support. Ensure that such support is allocated
- identify students who feel at risk of bullying. Ensure that they know where there are quiet/safe areas to go to outside of lessons.

All staff:

- be alert to all forms of bullying and never let an issue go
- take action and/or refer the situation to a line manager
- be assertive in dealing with students, but not aggressive. Be sensitive to students' feelings. Be aware that some youngsters feel vulnerable and may need your support
- understand that physical contact should only be made to restrain youngsters in danger of hurting either themselves or someone else.

Students:

- understand what bullying is and its impact upon others
- be aware of other people's feelings and sensitivities
- understand that some 'jokes' are not commonly understood or appreciated and may cause offence
- encourage each other to report any concerns or issues
- be prepared to accept that people make mistakes and can learn from them. This includes people who have been involved in bullying.

The Academy:

The Academy will respond to any reported incident of bullying:

- incidents will be dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly, parents/carers of bullies and victims should be involved where appropriate
- a reconciliation/peer mediation/mentoring scheme will be available for students.

The Academy has procedures for dealing with incidents such as bullying. If the bullying persists, staged action for both the bully and the victim will need to be adopted, with strategies included in the students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). It may be appropriate to provide one-to-one counselling support.

The Academy will continue to raise awareness of bullying issues through its PSHE programme, the peer mediation scheme, peer mentoring and the Academy Council.

Appendix: Additional Guidance

The response to bullying should aim to support the individual who feels under threat and change 'bullying' behaviour. Action should take into account the effect the behaviour has had on the victim; **remember**, the same behaviour will have different effects on different people. An awareness in the bully(ies) of the **effect** of his/her behaviour should therefore always be sought.

1. Staff should seek support if they are unsure what to do, feel unable to tackle any incident or feel they need to refer a situation on. Staff should only deal with incidents where they feel confident to do so. However, it is hoped that incidents can be responded to by:
  - their Director of Learning
  - Student Support Manager
  - senior staff.

2. All reported incidents of bullying should be taken seriously, recorded and any **subsequent action logged** using the management information system.
3. **A variety of strategies may be used in response:**
  - a) A non-punitive response may be appropriate: **we recommend the ‘no blame approach’** (below) as a **first-level** response in all cases (except where significant violence or other unlawful action has taken place).

#### THE NO-BLAME APPROACH

These steps prove to be very effective in stopping bullying recurring:

- **interviewing victim** - not to question fine details of incidents but to talk about how they feel, and who else is involved
- **convene a meeting with people involved** – this may include bystanders or colluders
- **explain the problems** - to tell them about the way the victim is feeling (not to discuss details of incident or allocate blame)
- **share responsibility** - encourage the group to take responsibility and do something about it
- **ask for ideas** - about how to make ‘victim’ feel happier from each member of the group
- **leave it up to them** - end the meeting by passing over responsibility to the group to solve the problem. Arrange to meet again to see how things are going
- **meet them again** - a week or so later to see how things are going. Also check with the victim - monitor the progress and keep the pupils involved and informed.

**REMEMBER ‘No Blame’ does not mean ‘No Action’**

- b) **Sanctions** against a ‘bully’ (or bullies) may be appropriate in accordance with wider Academy policies and ‘previous record’ of pupils involved, repeated anti-social behaviour (not responding to ‘no blame’ approach) **OR** incident or significant violence or unlawful behaviour.

These might include:

- verbal warning
- detentions
- letter home
- exclusion

However, changing bullying behaviour is unlikely to be achieved through sanctions alone. Sanctions may also produce resentment which will further endanger ‘the victim’. Therefore, also follow up sanctions by regularly checking with victim **and** bully about ‘how things are going’. Record the response, where appropriate, and make any further input as necessary.

4. Victims of bullying may need additional support, the degree of which will be related to the effect that the incident has had on the victim.
5. Pupils who are habitually involved in bullying behaviour need to be counselled and their parents/carers informed (about the behaviour **and** the Academy’s response).
6. New parents/carers need to be clear about the Academy’s attitude to bullying and the Academy’s response discussed as appropriate.

7. Verbal bullying should be recognised as equally serious as physical bullying. Where sanctions are involved they may need to be on a par with the sanctions used in cases of physical bullying.
8. Existing Academy guidelines on rights and responsibilities should be used in discouraging bullying behaviour in order to develop a supportive anti-bullying culture within the Academy.
9. A number of students will form a peer mentoring/mediation team, each of them having undergone training in counselling skills. The students will be attached to each Mini-school and will be available to assist students as necessary.  
  
They will also assist in the Bullying-Awareness Activities.
10. Preventative work is specifically undertaken in a number of areas of the curriculum, e.g.
  - PSHE Working on self-esteem, rights and responsibilities, bullying, equality, racism, stereotyping, relationships
  - Year 7 Working together – Awareness of others' emotions and sensitivities
  - Drama Work on recognition of bullying, peer pressure, equal rights, gender.

This guidance will be reviewed:

- as part of the Anti-Bullying Policy review
- as part of a wider review of the overall Behaviour Management of the Academy.