

# Anti-Bullying

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Target audience:	ALL ACADEMY STAFF MEMBERS

At Tees Valley Education Trust, all curriculum policies are developed in close communication with academy and trust stakeholders and support the overall trust policies. All policies are shared between academies to ensure cohesion and continuity while allowing each individual academy to personalise these in order to best support the unique learning journey of their pupils.

The following policy has been written to support the ethos, vision and values of both Discovery Special Academy and Tees Valley Education Trust. As a special school, the policy reflects the unique character of the academy and needs of the pupils while continuing to uphold the overall identity of the Trust.

### **The aims**

Discovery Special Academy is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all members of the academy community, so they can work and learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Discovery. If bullying does occur, all members of the community should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

### **The objectives**

- All trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All trustees and teaching and non-teaching staff know what the academy policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the academy policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As an academy we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is the behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Cyber: being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using technological means (e.g. email, chat rooms, forums, message boards, phones, webcams, gaming)
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, intimidating, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Disablist: taunts, gestures, discrimination or prejudice remarks against people who are disabled

## **Why is it important to confront bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Discovery Special Academy has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Signs and symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child displays unusual patterns of behaviour.

- doesn't want to go on transport
- begs to be driven to Discovery Special Academy
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to Academy (Academy phobic)
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in Academy work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or sensory needs, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

It is important to note that the nature of their learning needs means that some pupils with complex needs or additional learning needs may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying. Similarly, some pupils at Discovery, who are the recipients of such behaviours may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to such behaviours or to tell adults. This means that all staff at Discovery have a duty to not only be aware of such behaviours and of any child involved, but also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours.

## **Discovery Special Academy procedures**

- Pupils know staff will support them when reporting bullying incidents.
- In cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on CPOMS, which is then forwarded to the SLT team.

- Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- The victim will be supported by staff and other pupils (Buddy System).
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

### **Possible outcomes**

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered (see behaviour policy)
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled but no pressure should be placed on the victim of bullying to do this.
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### **Teaching programme, strategies and resources**

Anti-Bullying Education is delivered through the SMSC/PSHERE programme, and assemblies. Teachers use a broad variety of whole class or group teaching and learning strategies. Teachers are aware of the individual learning needs of their children. Teachers pay attention to different learning styles and adapt their inputs appropriately. Devices such as story boards, puppets, circle time and role play are incorporated into teaching and learning.

We use methods for helping children to prevent bullying.

- writing stories or poems or drawing a picture about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- Intervention using social stories
- Group therapy
- Behaviour support
- Buddy System

### **Healthy Academy standards**

At Discovery Special Academy we recognise the importance of promoting a healthy academy as an effective vehicle to promote Anti-Bullying. Discovery has achieved the Gold Headstart award and is a centre of excellence under the Inclusion Quality Mark.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The SLT/SEND, behaviour team and the headteacher are responsible for the overall monitoring of anti-bullying education. This will include:

- reviewing samples of pupils' work and questionnaires to find out children's views;
- teachers making comments on the work and lesson plans;
- feedback from teachers involved in the delivery of the programme; and
- feedback from pupils.

The views of pupils and teachers are essential for evaluation of the anti-bullying education programme. Feedback will be gained through discussions and written responses when necessary. Changes, if needed, will be made to the planning and teaching of the programme in light of the evaluation and evidence of best practice.

## DFE Guidance

“Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.” (DfE, 2017).

## Criminal Law

- 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.
- If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

## Cyber Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

All forms of bullying (including cyberbullying) should be handled as a community issue for the whole school. It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils. **But it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable.**

Evidence indicates that one in five (21%) teachers have reported having derogatory comments posted about them on social media sites from both parents and children. School leaders, teachers, school staff, parents and pupils all have rights and responsibilities in relation to cyberbullying and should work together to create an environment in which pupils can learn and develop and staff can have fulfilling careers free from harassment and bullying (DfE 2014).

- The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person’s mobile phone.
- If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

- Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.
- If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

### Bullying out of the academy

- Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.
- While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip (see behaviour policy for more details).

### Links to other relevant policies

The anti-bullying policy links to the following academy policies:

- Equality
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- British Values
- PSHE
- Behaviour

### HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0207 3548321
Children's Legal Centre	0120 6873820
KIDSCAPE (Parents Helpline, Mon-Fri 10-4)	0207 7303300
Parent line Plus	0808 8002222
Youth Access	0208 7729900

[www.childnet-int.org/kia/Special/smartadventure](http://www.childnet-int.org/kia/Special/smartadventure)