

Ashton Community Science College

Policy for addressing bullying

Ashton Community Science College does not support any behaviour which causes distress to students; this is evident in all the documents produced by the school and is reflected in our aims. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and staff must work together to counter it. All reports of bullying behaviour are taken seriously and are recorded. All members of the school community have the right to feel safe.

What is bullying?

Bullying falls into two categories:

- i) emotionally harmful behaviour, such as taunting, spreading hurtful rumours and excluding people from groups, or cyber bullying and
- ii) Physically harmful behaviour, such as kicking, hitting, pushing or other forms of physically abusive behaviour.

The agreed Ashton Community Science College definition of bullying is as follows

The behaviour constitutes bullying if:

- it is repetitive, wilful or persistent
- it is intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or group
- there is an imbalance of power leaving the person who is bullied feeling defenceless

In other words we define bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual group either physically or emotionally.

Specific types of bullying include:

- bullying related to race, religion or culture
 - bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
 - bullying related to appearance or health conditions
 - bullying related to home circumstances
 - bullying related to sexual orientation (including homophobic bullying)
 - sexist or sexual bullying
- (DCSF Guidance Safe to Learn p12 paragraph 1.9)

It is also important to acknowledge that bullying behaviour can and does occur **anywhere** and **everywhere**; in school, within the home and the community. As a school we actively promote anti-bullying initiatives, ensure students can recognise bullying behaviour, encourage a philosophy where it's ok to tell and we respond to all allegations of bullying.

To whom this policy applies

This policy applies to all people within the school community

Child to child

Adult to adult

Child to adult

Adult to child

When this policy applies

"The provisions of this policy will be applicable in relation to behaviour outside school on school business (for example school trips, sports fixtures, work experience etc), and also where there is a clear link between the behaviour and the maintaining of good order and discipline within the school. In appropriate circumstances, the provisions of the policy will also extend to cover the conduct of pupils when they are not on school premises and not under the control or supervision of a member of staff."

This policy applies to any incidents during the school day or organised school activities.

Recognising bullying behaviour

“Bullying behaviour includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.” (DCSF Guidance Safe to Learn p11 paragraph 1.7).

If the behaviour is deemed to meet the school’s definition of bullying, it will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. All other incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Behaviour Policy.

Responding to an Allegation of bullying behaviour

Any allegation of bullying behaviour should be dealt with as thoroughly and as quickly as possible. For many pupils the disclosure that he/she is being bullied is an intense step, and one that fills the student with anxiety. Adults should try to remember that the student might well be concerned about the response the adults will make. Students often fear they will not be believed or that there will be reprisals from the aggressor.

- Never ignore suspected bullying
- Don’t make premature assumptions
- Listen carefully to all accounts
- Adopt a problem solving approach
- Follow up repeatedly.

Procedures for reporting bullying behaviour

If you receive an allegation of bullying:

Where safeguarding is NOT an issue the member of staff recording the incident uses their professional judgment to decide the seriousness of the alleged bullying behavior, who will talk to the students involved and who else needs to be informed and at what stage.

The agreed member of staff should speak to the bullied student and ask him/her to write down their account with dates, places and times and names if possible. In relation to SEN students some learners will find it difficult to remember details of an incident if recording does not take place immediately. Staff should also be sensitive to the fact that some SEN students may have difficulty either communicating what happened or identifying the perpetrators and should check the students understanding. The students should then be asked what they would like to happen next (staff should be mindful that students sometimes articulate unrealistic expectations).

If the key teacher is satisfied the student is not in any immediate danger measures should be taken to support them for the rest of the day and if necessary until the situation is resolved.

A number of students may have to be spoken to in order to establish whether the allegations are true or false. Depending on the nature of the bullying incident and the names of the students involved staff will have to decide the most appropriate way to carry out enquiries.

If allegations are found to be true and there is no immediate threat to the student reassure the student you are taking the matter seriously. Ask the student what they would like to happen next. Explain how you will support the student for the rest of the day. Inform the student's progress leader contact should be made with the parents/carers of those involved. A bullying incident form 10b needs to be completed which includes the date and time parents were contacted.

If allegations are found not to be true reassure the student why this is not bullying. Tell the student what action will be taken in this instance. Ensure the bullying concern form (10a) is logged with the progress leader. Consider informing parents of the student's concerns. Set a day and time to meet again with the student. Make staff aware for future reference. Monitor and be vigilant.

Responding to a clear incident of bullying behaviour

In the event of a clear incident of bullying behaviour, the school's first responsibility is to ensure the safety of the bullied student. Escort the student to a place of safety and notify the Progress Leader you have done so. Supervise the student as you need to keep the students involved apart. A written account should be made by all parties involved including witnesses informing students that evidence will be kept on file. Record the incident thoroughly on the bullying incident form (10b) and decide who will inform parents/carers. Inform parents/carers and advise them how their actions might help the situation. If necessary decide how students will be kept safe after the incident and on their return to the school the next day. Decide an appropriate response in the short term and the need for any longer term solutions. Explain clearly to the students what your actions will be and give as much reassurance as possible to allay any anxieties. This is necessary for all students involved.

Responding to an extremely serious incident of violent behaviour

These incidents would include for example, injuries requiring medical treatment, attendance at hospital.

Immediate action

Assess safety of self and others and if necessary follow first-aid procedures and call an ambulance and/or police if required. If the police are to deal with the incident the school must not investigate.

If medical attention is not required follow the procedure as outlined above.

Does the situation require the support of outside agencies? If so may be a CAF needs to be completed.

In the event of a critical incident the will refer to its policy on dealing with critical incidents and consider whether it is necessary to call CIST (critical incident support team)

If a Parent complains about Bullying

All interviews with parents / carers should be recorded, signed and dated.

When a parent/ carer first raises a concern about bullying behaviour it is important that the school responds quickly and in a positive way. Even if a concern is reported informally by a parent/ carer e.g. at the school gate, the member of staff should still log the concern, using the bullying concern for 10a, and act upon it. Enquiries should be carried out and parents / carers informed of the findings. The school can also offer support to the parent / carer as to how they might support their child. The progress leader should follow up with a phone call to parents/carers after about two weeks to ensure no further occurrence has taken place.

If parents/carers are not happy with the way the progress leader has dealt with the situation then it should be passed on to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Responding to the parent/carers of a pupil who is using bullying behaviour

This is potentially a difficult interview. It may be necessary to prove to parents / carers the nature of their child's behaviour and to support parents / carers in recognising how they can support their child to change their behavior. Care needs to be taken to ensure the identity of others is protected or remains confidential.

Responding to incidents of cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying and the majority of cases can be dealt with existing anti-bullying policies and behaviour procedures. However, young people, professionals and parents should recognise the ways in which cyber bullying differs from other forms of bullying and reflect that in how they respond to it. In addition to considerations about the invasiveness of cyber bullying, the size of the audience, and other such factors, cyber bullying yields potential 'evidence' in a way that other forms of bullying do not.

There are other additional reporting routes other than through school which victims of cyber bullying may use, for example through mobile phone companies, internet providers and social network providers. The person being bullied should keep examples of texts or emails received as these may help the investigation.

The student will be advised on steps they can take to avoid the reoccurrences, for example, not to reply to any messages, block or remove people from their friendship list.

Steps will be taken to identify the person responsible for the bullying. For example, looking at IT monitoring systems and computer logs, speaking to possible witnesses and with police involvement obtaining user information from the service provider.

Once the person responsible for the cyber bullying has been identified as in other cases of bullying sanctions will be applied. Steps will be taken to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully. They will also be made aware of the policy for internet and mobile phone use.

Responding to incidents of homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying will be dealt with in the same way as any other incident of bullying. However, any student who is the target of homophobic bullying (irrespective of their sexual orientation) may find disclosing to an adult very difficult. Staff will act promptly to stop any inappropriate language, behaviour or victimisation that they witness or are made aware of by others.

Intervention and Support

All incidents which are deemed to meet Ashton Community Science College's definition of bullying will be recorded by the relevant Progress Leader and a Bullying Incident form will be opened. This form is available either in the staffroom on either campus or electronically on the staff shared folder. All intervention and support will be recorded on this form. Once the file has been closed, all paperwork will be retained by the Progress Leader.

Whenever there is an incident of bullying a lead person needs to be nominated. This is usually the progress leader. They will take an active role in the investigation and follow up. As everyone has a duty of care there may be times when it may not always be the Progress Leader. They will also be the one who completed the relevant paper work. Forms 10a and 10b can be found in the staffroom on both campuses and on the shared area.

Intervention strategies may include:

Completing a CAF to see if there are any other issues which may come to light.

Other professionals working with the young people involved, e.g., Via Partnerships. MIND, school counsellors, PCSO's, peer mentoring, buddy, CAMHS, restorative justice.

Preventative measures

Attempts are made to prevent bullying by including work on self-esteem, friendship and bullying in every Year Group's PSHE programme. We have an annual anti-bullying week. Assemblies, thought for the week, and an annual E-safety week ensure anti-bullying has a high profile in the academic year. Transition work, the school council, the reward system, Record of Achievement and the Mentoring Programme further serve this purpose.

All students are made aware of the serious way in which the School views bullying and of the way in which it is dealt with via School literature, P.S.H.E. work, Assemblies, the Behaviour Code and the Student Learning Council. The school operates an 'open door' and 'OK to tell policy'. We are an anti-bullying school.

Implementation of the policy

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that this policy is carried out. It will be brought to the attention of the members of Ashton Community Science College by:

- Induction programme of new staff
- regular whole staff training, through meetings and INSET
- as an agenda item at the half termly pastoral meetings
- Discussed in weekly welfare meetings with the Student Services Leader
- Termly school council meetings
- Anti-bullying week
- Anti-bullying unit in PSHE
- School website
- Governors' meetings
- Annual letter to parents'
- Thought for the day in form time.

Monitoring the policy process

The data from the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire will be used for establishing baseline data on which the monitoring process will be built. The PAQ will also be used to find the opinions amongst children as to the effectiveness of the policy. The School council will also be involved in this process which ensures all students have are able to voice their opinion. The Deputy Head of Campus and Student Services Leader have responsibility to check recording and the reporting procedures are being applied consistently. It is the responsibility of the Progress Leaders to monitor the number and types of bullying incidents and provide number of incidents at the half termly pastoral meetings.

Evaluating the policy

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Pastoral Deputy Head of Campus and Student Services Leader to the Governors. The school will monitor the implementation of the policy and evaluate its impact using the following indicators:

- the number of bullying incidents for the 12 months prior.
- the pupil attitude questionnaire findings.
- analysis of relevant behavior data including fixed term exclusions and time in Compass.
- analysis of attendance data.
- feedback through the Student Council.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

E-Safety Policy

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Single Equalities Policy

School Travel Policy