

ASHBY SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

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LINKS TO OTHER ASHBY POLICIES

This document should be read in conjunction with the following Ashby policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Ashby School Anti-Bullying Policy

Principle

At Ashby School we believe that all students and members of staff should be able to study or work without feeling threatened or uncomfortable whether this is intended or not. This policy covers bullying incidents between students as well as towards adults or children by parents/carers or other groups associated with the school.

At Ashby School, we:

- Discuss, monitor and review this anti-bullying policy every two years with staff, students, governors and parents.
- Support staff to promote positive relationships and to be able to identify and tackle bullying in all forms appropriately.
- Ensure that all students are aware that all bullying concerns are promptly dealt with both sensitivity and effectively.
- Encourage parents/carers to work with us in order to uphold this policy.
- Aim to learn from effective anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Report back to parents/carers and students regarding their bullying concerns and deal with any complaints promptly.

Aims and Objectives

- To clarify to students and staff that bullying is always unacceptable. Everyone should feel safe and be protected when feeling vulnerable.
- To create an atmosphere where students and/or their friends will feel that they will be appropriately supported and action will be taken sensitively to address the problem.
- To make staff aware of the signs to look for, and note changes in work patterns, behaviours or attendance which may suggest there is a problem
- To understand that bullying can have a serious effect on a student's self-esteem, emotional, mental and physical health and to do everything in our power to prevent this by acting swiftly when bullying is identified.

Definition of Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- Repeated
- Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally

How bullying is tackled depends on the nature of the incident.

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- Physical - Hitting, kicking, taking or hiding something, sexual assault.
- Verbal - Name-calling, teasing, insulting, threatening language.
- Emotional/Psychological - Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, defacing property, graffiti.
- Cyber bullying - Such as using technology to make threats and/or derogatory comments. This can take a number of different forms: Threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts, instant messages or use of social media), sexting (e.g. sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones) vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images and 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online).

People may be bullied for a variety of reasons including their:

- Race
- Religion or cultural background
- SEND - We should be alert to the fact that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are often at greater risk of being bullied than other pupils on the basis of their educational difficulties or disability

- Appearance
- Health condition
- Home circumstances
- Gender and gender identity (which can include transphobic bullying and sexual harassment)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic and bi-phobic bullying)

At Ashby School we believe that:

- Bullying is unacceptable.
- Bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found.
- Seeking help is a sign of strength not weakness.
- All members of the school community will be supported and taken seriously.
- Everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear.
- All of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others.
- Every young person should have a trusted adult that they can talk to
- Young people should talk to a trusted adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously.
- Young people should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them.
- We all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.
- We have a vital role to support and rehabilitate perpetrators of bullying

Reporting Bullying and Procedures

The best way to stop bullying is to get help so we actively encourage students who feel they are being bullied, or who are worried another student is being bullied, to tell someone without delay.

If you are being bullied:

- Don't feel guilty as it is not your fault.
- Tell a trusted adult about the incident. This may be your class teacher, form tutor, year team leader or any other member of staff
- Keep calm and give a clear account of what has happened, when and by whom
- Inform your parents/carers about it and tell them that you have told the school.
- If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at school or at home then you can phone the 24 hour Childline service. All calls are free and confidential and trained counsellors will help any young person with a problem.

If you witness bullying towards another member of the school, report it to an adult immediately.

If a student reports being bullied to you as an adult:

- Listen carefully and sympathetically to what you are being told.
- Record key information
- Treat the matter seriously and pass the information onto the relevant Year Team Leader (YTL) or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

If a student reports being bullied to a parent/carer:

- Please contact the relevant YTL as quickly as possible with as much information as possible.
- If you need to meet the year team leader to discuss the bullying issue then arrange to come into school.
- If you are concerned about the way in which an issue has been dealt with, please contact the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Rundle-Brown as soon as possible.

If another student/parent or member of the community reports that they believe a student is being bullied:

- As a school we believe that being a bystander to bullying is unacceptable. We encourage the reporting of any suspicion of others being bullied in whatever form this may take.
- Please contact a year team leader as quickly as possible with as much information as possible.
- We will also consider relevant sanctions should we discover that a member of our school community has acted as a bystander and failed to report bullying that they have witnessed.

- If you are concerned about the way in which an issue has been dealt with, please contact the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Rundle-Brown as soon as possible.

The parents/carers of all parties should be informed immediately and where appropriate invited to the school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.

A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling (where appropriate), should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for the students who are being bullied and for students who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. A meeting involving all parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode. A monitoring strategy and review strategy will be put in place. In very serious cases, and only after the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Headteacher has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 a bullying incident should be addressed as a Safeguarding concern where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. In line with KCSIE 2023 all child-on-child abuse will also be treated as a Safeguarding matter.

It is the policy of Ashby School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. The school may suspend a student, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

Where bullying outside of school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide if it is appropriate to recommend that parents/carers notify the police or whether it is appropriate for the school to notify the police.

Ashby School will always support students who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. This can include a quiet word from a form tutor or a member of the pastoral staff who knows the pupil well. Pastoral support will be offered and may include group work, formal counselling, engaging with parents or referring to the local authority children's services.

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

It is our expectation that Ashby School students will work together and respect each other.

- All students have access to a 'I need to talk' button on their network homepage. This enables them to request help without having to directly approach an adult which they may find intimidating. This is responded to with 1 school day by a member of the year team.
- Form tutors play a vital role in developing effective relationships with students and respective parents.
- Year team leaders are experienced at dealing with any bullying incidents and will support colleagues in dealing with issues.
- Bullying can take place between lessons, at break-times and on the school buses. Staff both teaching and non-teaching, should therefore be vigilant and observant on break and lunch duties and report any concern to the year tutors.
- When speaking to the perpetrator we will make it clear that it is their behaviour we disapprove of, not them as individuals.
- It is acknowledged that a preventative policy will save time and ensure all students get the message so the topic will be covered in assemblies, tutor time, PSD and in supporting whole school anti-bullying campaigns.

Signs of bullying

Ongoing or changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school or go to a particular activity or lesson
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged

- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Being alone and separate from peers/other students
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents/carers and teachers and addressed.

Confidentiality

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.

Recording Bullying and Evaluation

Anonymous staff and student voice questionnaires are used to monitor perceptions of the problem. We will note from the analysis of our safeguarding data the number of incidents and the students involved. Bullying incidents will be recorded electronically on CPOMs by the YTL who deals with the incident. This information will be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy by the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead. Bullying statistics will be discussed regularly at SLT and governor meetings as part of these reports. The policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Additional sources of guidance and information

Outside agencies who can offer support are.

- Childline: 0800 1111
- NSPCC: 0800 800 5000
- Samaritans: 116 123
- National Bullying Helpline: 0300 323 0169