



**Northern House
Academy**

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Signed: Head Teacher	_____
Chair of IEB	_____

Introduction

Northern House Academy believes that every child has the right to a safe and secure environment in which to learn and achieve their potential. This policy outlines our strategies for dealing with bullying. It provides advice, guidance and support to staff, parents and students in all matters relating to bullying at our academy.

Definition of bullying

An accepted definition of bullying is that it is the intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of others.

Below is our community's shared understanding of what bullying is :

*'It **could be bullying** when a person or group of people's behaviours, over a period of time, leaves someone feeling one or more of the following:*

- *Physically and/or mentally hurt or worried,*
- *Unsafe and/or frightened,*
- *Unable to do well and achieve,*
- *'badly different', alone, unimportant and/or undervalued, and*
- *Unable to see a happy and exciting future for themselves.*

*It is **definitely bullying** when a person or group of people has been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person and they continue to behave in the same manner.'*

If someone is made to feel like this, or they think someone they know feels like this, it should be investigated. This should happen straight away as it can take a long time to build up the courage to tell someone. However, lots of things can make people feel bad, sometimes it depends on the situation we are in, and it is not always bullying – so the following two definitions are also useful:

1. Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:
 - is meant to hurt – the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it
 - happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'on-off' incident
 - involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves
2. Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally

Methods and practices of bullying

The following are some examples of the many different forms of bullying:

Physical – for example kicking, hitting, spitting, pushing, taking and damaging belongings or threatening to do any of these things.

Verbal – for example name calling, taunting, threats, offensive or discriminatory remarks, whether about people or objects.

Non-verbal – for example gestures which are meant to threaten or intimidate such as ‘dirty looks’.

Indirect, emotional or relational – for example spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or nasty stories, gossiping, exclusion from social groups, forcing someone to do something against their will, tormenting, ‘dirty looks’ or producing offensive graffiti.

Cyber – for example sending offensive text messages, using pictures or video clips, Instant Messaging, emails, social networking sites or other electronic contact to cause harm, embarrassment or discredit to students or staff at the academy.

Prejudice-related – for example bullying or harassment that is homophobic, gender based, sexist, sexual or transphobic, racist or discriminating against religion, Special Educational Needs, disabilities, health conditions or a person’s home circumstances, such as being looked after, or caring for a family member. This includes actions or language that discriminates against people for any of these reasons, or other reasons relating to a person’s identity.

Sexual – for example inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, verbal comments or cyber messages of a sexual nature.

Bullying includes the above but it is not limited to this. It also includes;

- any form of behaviour which is the result of a specific strategy to make an individual feel miserable
- organising others to do any of the above
- excluding an individual in such a way that they are made to feel vulnerable and different in a negative way.

Northern House Academy rejects all of the above forms of bullying and will not tolerate them in our community.

Discriminatory Language

Discriminatory language is sometimes used without thinking and in some schools is ignored by teachers and other staff members because they feel it is difficult to know how to respond or they believe the language is used without any discriminatory intent. At Northern House Academy we challenge all discriminatory language whenever it is used. When responding to discriminatory language, staff will:

- tell the student that discriminatory language is not acceptable at the academy and explain that such language is offensive
- if students continue to use unacceptable language, explain in more detail the effect that discrimination and discriminatory language have on people and that racist, homophobic, sexist and other forms of discriminatory language will not be tolerated
- if a student continues, remove the student from the classroom and talk to them in more detail about their behaviour and why it is offensive
- parents will be informed if their child continues to use discriminatory language.

Procedures for dealing with bullying

Positive Action

Awareness of bullying is covered in our work with students through:

- Assemblies
- Working with the national Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week every November
- Anti-Bullying questionnaires to students
- Curriculum work in the classroom including Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)
- Feelings check in time in the classroom
- One to one and small group discussions
- Students having confidence in situations being dealt with promptly
- A restorative approach to dealing with problems and conflict with a focus on repairing any harm that may have been done through 'Mend It Meetings' (MIM).

Strategies in the classroom

In the classroom, consideration is given to:

- Room layout
- Availability of resources
- Guidelines for classroom behaviour, consistent with those set out in the academy's Behaviour Policy
- Consideration of student voice is crucial in agreeing and maintaining rules and routines
- Use of positive reinforcement and rewards using the academy's reward scheme (Learning Passports)
- Use of feelings check in time in the classroom enabling students to discuss problems and possible resolutions
- Developing our students' self-esteem so they feel confident to speak up for themselves
- Monitoring and addressing inappropriate behaviour
- Flexible learning practices, taking account of different learning styles
- Co-operative rather than competitive practices
- Promotion of independent learning

Strategies out of the classroom

Out of the classroom, consideration is given to:

- Positive promotion of restorative principles to encourage all to respect themselves as well as others
- Encouraging students to choose appropriate free association activities and providing break time activities daily
- Providing an alternative quiet play and quiet lunch spaces
- Careful supervision of all areas, particularly during taxi arrivals and departures, break time and lunchtime ensuring opportunities to bully are minimised
- Adults providing positive role models
- Use of restorative approaches in school (for more information about restorative approaches please see our Behaviour Policy)

Off-site bullying

We are aware that several areas in and around the school are vulnerable to bullying including;

- the playground
- in taxis
- in the toilets
- in the corridor
- where access to computers or other electronic devices is allowed.

The academy has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its students and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside the academy for example in journeys to and from the academy, in after-hours activities or through the use of technology such as the internet or mobile phones outside of the academy's hours. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Head Teachers the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying)."

The academy will intervene and notify parents if we hear of:

- cyberbullying via social networking sites e.g. malicious messages on somebody's wall or profile, creation of a fake profile
- filming on mobile phones and passing on inappropriate material or joining in with this behaviour even if they were not the original author
- other cyberbullying or off-site bullying.

To help prevent and reduce bullying off-site, the academy will

- talk to the Schools Liaison Police Officer
- talk to the Head Teachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises
- discuss coping and preventative strategies with parents, such as alternative travel arrangements
- educate students about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the academy's premises, including cyber-bullying and e-safety information
- link with local service providers such as transport providers, the Early Intervention Service and youth groups to share knowledge and best practice.

If the academy is aware of a bullying incident outside of the academy staff will

- follow the academy's protocol for dealing with an incident as far as possible, depending on the situation, including recording and reporting protocols, and contacting parents and carers
- provide support and advice to the person being bullied (if they are within the academy)
- support and work with the person doing the bullying (if they are within the academy)
- investigate and consider the following actions with respect to the person bullying:
 - o confiscation of mobile phones and other electronic devices
 - o the involvement of police in any form of on-going bullying particularly when related to cyber-bullying. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public the police will always be informed
- inform any other relevant schools or agencies about the concerns and any actions taken

- if information is received that a child is being bullied by a sibling outside of the academy this will initially be discussed with parents and carers
- if children are being bullied by students from another school the Head Teacher of that school will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.

Identifying bullying

Students often do not report bullying when it happens to them. It is, therefore, very important for all adults to be alert to some factors that might indicate that bullying has taken place, or is occurring. These include:

- Sudden changes to patterns of absence
- Unexplained changes in a student's personality e.g. a normally outgoing student becomes sullen, withdrawn or aggressive
- Passive acceptance of inappropriate behaviour and/or language
- Possessions go missing or work is defaced
- A decrease in student progress and levels of achievement which are not easily explained
- A student who stops participating in favourite activities
- A student who takes a long time eating their lunch and/or shows an unwillingness to go to lunchtime in the hall
- Students who stay close to members of staff during free association when this has not been the case previously.

This list is not exhaustive, neither is it always reliable evidence that bullying is taking place. Staff should use their professional judgement when making a decision to take matters further.

Guidelines for staff

General procedures for dealing with bullying will follow these principles:

- 1. Staff will make time to listen** - staff will make sure that students know they are ready to listen and are ready to provide immediate support. They remain calm and make it clear that the incident will be investigated. There will always be a member of staff available to give time to the student requiring support. All incidents of bullying are followed up with a 'Mend It Meeting' (MIM).
- 2. Incidents are investigated** – every incident is investigated as soon as possible, by way of restorative enquiry. All those involved are interviewed individually to avoid intimidation and to produce an accurate report. All incidents are reported to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and are recorded on relevant behaviour monitoring sheets.
- 3. Records are kept** – records of bullying are kept in the form of monitoring sheets and the data which is collected is compared to other forms of behaviour. This is carried out by the SLT.
- 4. There is a response** – following a restorative enquiry:
 - a. To the person doing the bullying – they will be spoken to regarding the seriousness and widespread effects of their behaviour. They will be given an opportunity to take part in a Mend It Meeting to gain an understanding of the impact of their behaviour, accept responsibility for their actions and to work on

finding solutions to repairing the damage that they have done. Parents will be involved, if appropriate, and strategies to help the student behave more appropriately in the future will be put in place and followed up;

- b. To the person being bullied – they will be assured that the situation is being dealt with. They will also be given strategies to help deal with the situation and an opportunity to take part in a Mend It Meeting as appropriate;
- c. Staff will emphasise that the student is right to tell an adult if they are having a problem with another student.

5. Review and follow up – this will be carried out as appropriate to the situation. As in the Behaviour Policy, praise and encouragement will always be given to the student's individual efforts to improve their behaviour.

6. Opportunities to review behaviours – all affected students are made aware of and helped to deal with the causes of bullying as well as the consequences of bullying. There is always a reason behind why a person makes a choice to bully another. Part of dealing with an incident of bullying must include support for the student engaged in the bullying, ensuring they are given opportunities to talk about how they are feeling and why they feel they may be behaving in this way, as well as supporting the victim of the bullying.

Guidelines for Students

If you are being bullied here are some things you might want to try:

- Most important of all is to tell someone you trust as soon as possible
- Get together with some friends and support one another
- Get support from the adults around you at times when you feel unsafe
- Try to be confident and celebrate your successes
- Keep telling yourself that it is not your fault and you do not deserve it.

Guidelines for Parents

If you are concerned that your child is being bullied the following may help:

- In the first instance parents should contact the school and relay relevant information and seek a call-back as appropriate
- Encourage your child to talk about it but be patient with them if they are reluctant to talk at first
- Try not to burden them with lots of questions
- Stay calm
- Try not to dwell on sensitive issues
- Reassure them that you understand and will support them
- Discuss with your child the kinds of things that they would like to happen now
- Encourage them to think about positive parts of their life and to celebrate their successes.

If the bullying is violent and constitutes an assault then other measures, in line with the academies policies and procedures, should be taken and students should be warned that this is the case. This may include contact with the police and other agencies who may initiate further action.