



PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST

Anti-Bullying Policy



Summary:

The Anti-Bullying policy ensure that our practices have been developed to ensure that there is an environment within the Trust that is conducive to learning, so that all pupils of all abilities, backgrounds, and needs can achieve their academic potential and prepare for life.

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1. Introduction

The Trustees, School Performance Review Boards (SPRBs) and staff of Pontefract Academies Trust (The Trust) are committed to providing a learning environment which will support the children and young people in our care.

The Trust has very high standards and expectations of our pupils. The Trust believes that all pupils have the capacity and the right to reach their full potential. Therefore, the policy and our practices have been developed to ensure that there is an environment within the Trust that is conducive to learning, so that all pupils of all abilities, backgrounds and needs can achieve their academic potential and prepare for life.

Aims

- To prevent the occurrence of bullying within the Trust's primary and secondary schools.
- To ensure that all stakeholders understand what bullying is and how it is dealt with.
- To create a positive and safe learning environment for all.
- To develop individuals' self-esteem and respect for others.
- To have a zero tolerance of incidents of bullying.
- To deal with bullying by tailoring a personalised package of pupil support for mediation, intervention and in how and what appropriate sanctions are applied.
- To ensure incidents of bullying are reported by specific categories and appropriate education is put in place in response to these.

Objectives

- To identify bullying and accept that it is a problem which can occur in any setting where children are brought together.
- To be clear to all what is meant by the term 'bullying'.
- To establish clear procedures for the course of action to be taken in respect to bullying incidents.
- To create safe conditions for children which are built upon mutual respect, co-operation and equal opportunities.
- To establish that an important part of being valued for children is being listened to, believed and appropriate considered action taking place.
- To have clear procedures, known and understood by all, including a system by which discrepancies can be dealt with and reviewed.
- This is a Trust wide policy. Where pupil support structures vary between secondary and primary schools, the relevant staff roles within our primary schools will be listed within brackets alongside secondary staff roles.

2. Links with other policies or legislation

There are a number of policies linked to this policy, including:

- SEND Policy.
- Behaviour and Relationships Policies.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

This policy links to the Department for Education's statutory guidance and related legislation including:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- School Discipline Regulations 2012
- Behaviour in School's Guidance

There are also links to current Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance and the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice. All staff in the Trust are required to understand and be fully aware of through our internal CPD.

3. Definition of bullying

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. This can be targeted or motivated by an imbalance of power and have significant impact on the individual. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.

- **Emotional** - Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force.
- **Physical** - Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference.
- **Verbal** - Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats. Ridiculing an individual.
- **Cyber** - All areas of the internet, such as email and/or internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and/or calls and misuse of associated technology.

There are many forms that bullying takes, as described above. Examples of bullying against targeted groups include:

- **Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- **Sexual orientation** – offensive behaviour because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse.
- **Sexist** – offensive name calling, misogynistic behaviour.
- **Disablist** – offensive name calling, laughing, not supporting or excluding.
- **Religion** – derogatory remarks about a person's religious belief.

Bullying can take place inside or outside of school life. For clarity, this policy extends to any bullying that happens off school premises, as well as within the school day.

Where bullying takes place off the school premises, including online, the Trust will respond where the behaviour has an impact on the wellbeing of pupils, the orderly running of the school, or the reputation of the Trust. Any such incidents will be considered in conjunction with the Trust's

Behaviour and Relationships Policies. Online bullying is treated with the same seriousness as in-person bullying and can be addressed even when it occurs off site.

In addition to our procedures for dealing with bullying, the school will seek police advice where they believe a hate crime has been, or could be, committed.

4. The frequency of bullying

Bullying can take place several times a week or day. It can go on for months and even years. There is recognition that bullying can manifest itself within a school but often occurs beyond the realm of a school. We have an expectation of parents/carers to be supportive in the process of eliminating any form of bullying.

5. The severity of bullying

Bullying ranges from horseplay to vicious assault. It is recognised that bullying can be extremely subtle and therefore difficult to deal with.

6. The motivation

The bully gets pleasure from other people's pain, fear and humiliation. The bully learns that aggressive behaviour allows him/her to dominate and get his/her own way. Sadly, the bully may also learn that creating fear in the victim is a rewarding experience.

The bully often focuses on younger, smaller or timid children. The bully increasingly relies on threat and force.

7. Direct and indirect bullying

It is important to distinguish the difference, i.e. between those who are bullies and victims, and the larger group of pupils who are onlookers. Sometimes the bullies operate in secret places, but often they feel quite confident that no one will stop them and they bully others in public. The onlookers are then part of the bullying.

8. Child on child abuse

Child on child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical and sexual abuse.
- Sexual harassment and violence.
- Emotional harm.
- On and offline bullying.
- Teenage relationship abuse.

There is not always a clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and those that are more appropriately managed as bullying or developmentally expected behaviour. This distinction requires careful professional judgement and should always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Downplaying certain types of behaviours, for example dismissing sexual

harassment as just 'banter' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and in the worst-case scenario actually normalise abuse.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse; bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned.
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more children.
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

Bullying concerns that meet safeguarding thresholds will be referred immediately to the DSL and handled in line with our safeguarding policy.

Child on child abuse can result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation for the victim. It should also have a detrimental impact on the perpetrator.

Staff should be particularly vigilant in evaluating potential abuse when dealing with vulnerable groups. It is important to remember, as with all safeguarding issues, child on child abuse can especially impact those who children who are SEND, are in care or who are living in homes where domestic abuse is prevalent.

Understanding the power dynamic that can exist between children is very important in helping to identify and respond to child on child abuse. A thorough investigation of the concerns should take place to include any wider contexts which may be known. The young person who has been harmed should always be made to feel safe and actions will need to be taken to separate them from those harming them.

9. Recording bullying

It is widely recognised that there is a vast range of types of bullying and varying degrees of severity. It is often difficult to detect more subtle types of bullying which may not be obvious or overt. However, as in all matters relating to standards and expectations, what follows rests on the professional judgement of all colleagues to exercise that judgement as and when it is felt appropriate or necessary.

Staff should liaise with key individuals, such as the pupil's Tutor, Student Liaison Officers and/or Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion Leaders/SLT/SENCOs), who will work together to investigate the incident.

The key member of staff will liaise with pupils, parents/carers and staff, ensuring that all parties are aware of any incident, the progress/outcome of an investigation and when appropriate any sanction and intervention applied to the pupil(s) involved.

The Senior Leadership Team will have oversight of bullying issues via the weekly briefing session with the Student Liaison Team, the pupil's BROMCOM/Class Charts record, the school's bullying tracker and the external agencies used by the schools.

Incidents of bullying will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team on a termly basis and broken down into the following categories. All categories can cover the spectrum of protected characteristics.

- Emotional.
- Physical.
- Verbal.
- Cyber.
- Sexual orientation.
- Racial.

10. Curriculum, education and support

We communicate our policy on bullying in various ways and ensure that pupils are well educated on why bullying is wrong and ensure that they know how to keep themselves and others safe and free from bullying. This is done in a variety of ways including:

- Threaded themes in subject areas.
- High profile assemblies.
- Form/lesson time.
- Whole schools focus days and weeks.

Our approach emphasises prevention, early intervention, and restorative practice alongside any disciplinary measures.

11. Pastoral support

Pupils have access to a range of support (listed below) to help them recognise, deal with and report bullying issues:

- Senior Leaders.
- Class Teachers.
- Form Tutors (Secondary)
- Student Liaison Officers (Secondary)
- Learning Mentors.
- Inclusion Leaders.
- Learning Support Assistants.
- SENCo.
- Assistant SENCo.
- Child Protection Officer.

The School Council at each school (or equivalent) will provide an opportunity for pupils to discuss all aspects of their school experiences and suggest improvements to aspects of school life.

Pupils will, through the pastoral teams at school have support for both victims and perpetrator. This is through additional agencies that are working with the children and families and the school's pastoral teams.

12. Expectations and guidance

Staff

Staff watch out for early signs of distress in pupils, such as:

- Deterioration of work.
- Spurious illness.
- Isolation or the desire to remain with adults.
- Erratic attendance and punctuality.
- Change in personality, behaviour or application or disposition.
- Internal truancy.
- Change in behaviour.

These behaviours may be a warning of other problems but may also be indicative of bullying.

Listen carefully and record all incidents of bullying on CPOMS.

Offer the victim and the bully support and help by putting the school's procedures into operation. If the victim discloses anything you deem to be a welfare or safeguarding issue then disclose this information immediately to a member of the Child Protection Team (see the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more detail).

Pupils

The schools' expectations are included in the Trust's Behaviour and Relationship Policies.

In general:

- As members of our schools, we do not expect pupils to put up with any form of bullying behaviour.
- Pupils will fall out with their peers and therefore pupils need to think carefully about distinguishing the differences between a fall out and bullying.
- When someone is being bullied or in distress, inform an adult immediately.
- Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for bullying.
- Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends.
- Only accept people that do not bully others. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out.
- Informing is not 'telling tales'.
- Staff must always inform parents of bullying incidents concerning their children.

Parents/carers

Look out for the early signs of bullying highlighted above in your child(ren). If you have any concerns, contact the school that your child(ren) attend(s).

Parents/carers should know:

- The school's expectations of parent/carer responsibility.
- Parents/carers may have to attend their child's school to support the school in resolving issues.
- All of our schools take bullying concerns seriously and will always deal with any concerns.

Appendix A: Procedures to identify and tackle bullying

Staff guidance

This guidance provides general advice. Each incident will be dealt with depending on the severity, the pupils involved and any relevant circumstances. It also provides an outline of the steps that could be taken when there are instances of bullying.

If bullying is reported, or if a member of staff notices a bullying incident:

Minor incidents will be reported to the pupil's Tutor (or *Inclusion Leader, teacher or any other relevant staff member*), who should investigate the incident and inform the relevant school staff verbally of the outcome. Staff need to be able to recognise the difference between bullying and conflict issues.

For serious incidents of bullying, staff will inform the Student Liaison Officer and/or the Assistant Headteacher. Normally, the procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.

Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately.

- Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils interviewed.
- If a pupil is injured, immediately seek medical support (any injuries will be recorded accordingly).
- Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
- Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgmental at this stage.
- Be non-confrontational.
- Ask the alleged bully and the alleged victim to write down details. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.
- Ask additional witnesses/bystanders for information, preferably written.
- Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
- Listen carefully to all accounts - several pupils saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
- Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach, which moves a bully on from justifying themselves. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.
- Staff should consider the wider context of the incident, including social dynamics and communication difficulties, while making clear that responsibility for bullying behaviour always lies with the person who has caused harm. Tell all pupils interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.

Record details of the bullying

- Write a very brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet is needed for each pupil involved.

- Place these interview sheets in the individual files of each pupil involved.
- Write a more detailed single account and attach written statements of alleged victim, alleged bully and witnesses. Full names of all involved should be included in this account.
- The member of staff should keep a record of all incidents of bullying for the pupils in their year group.
- Inform the parents/carers of all parties that an investigation is being carried out and that they will be kept informed at every stage of the process. Record this telephone call accordingly.

Take appropriate action to deal with the bully

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the pupil to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
- If possible, try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the pupil.
- Realise that some pupils do not appreciate the distress that they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour. Do not however, force a face-to-face meeting. This **must** be the decision of the pupils.
- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the pupil to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
- Inform parents/carers about bullying incidents and what action is being taken and record it accordingly.
- If initial attempts to stop the bullying fail, apply an appropriate level of sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the bullying (sanctions can be found in the Trust's Behaviour and Relationships Policies).
- The Tutor/Student Liaison Officer/Inclusion Leader/Headteacher will informally monitor pupils over the next term.
- If bullying is racist, inform the Assistant Headteacher/Headteacher immediately.
- Support the bully.

Support the victim – follow up checks

- The key member of staff should informally check in a considered and sensitive manner whether the bullying has stopped.
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If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places in classes/form rooms.

- Most bullying groups have a leader, with other pupils in the group being frightened of being bullied themselves.
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- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in the school that they attend if bullying is repeated.
- Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups by joining a lunchtime or after school club or activity.
- Discuss bullying in assembly/class/form time and ask pupils to suggest possible solutions.
- If bullying is about a particular issue (disability for example), consider how the thematic curriculum could facilitate a whole school approach to educating pupils.
- If bullying occurs on the bus, ask an older pupil to take care of the victim.
- If bullying is by pupils from another school, the key member of staff should telephone a relevant member of staff at the other school and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation.
- Ask another pupil to befriend and support the victim.

Provide supportive guidance to help the pupil develop confidence, resilience, and positive peer relationships, without attributing blame for the bullying behaviour.

- Use peer mediation to resolve conflict if appropriate (using trained pupils only).

Sanctions

Sanctions to deal with bullying behaviour will be dependent on the level, seriousness and persistence of the bullying.

For minor/single incidents:

- An apology and assurance that the bullying will stop; **OR**
- A detention; **OR**
- Internal inclusion in secondary; **OR**
- A piece of extra written work that reinforces the reason why bullying is not acceptable; **OR**
- Meeting with parents/carers; **OR**
- A temporary exclusion from certain areas of the school's premises (secondary setting).

In more serious or persistent cases, a suspension for a fixed period of time or a permanent exclusion may be sanctioned.