# Anti-Bullying Policy

# Contents

## 1.0    Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe establishment for all our students in all of our academies so that they can learn to the best of their ability in a positive and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our academies. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to inform staff and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are conscious that bullying usually involves an imbalance of power and children with specific protected characteristics may be more likely to suffer bullying. Therefore, staff should be particularly vigilant when supervising the interactions between certain children. In all our academies, we place a strong emphasis on discipline, a positive culture of achievement and the respect and acceptance of all. This is expressed through our mission and values. We celebrate diversity yet emphasise commonality. This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

• Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

• Equality policy

• Positive Behaviour policy

## 2.0    Scope and purpose

• To prevent bullying from occurring.

• To create a positive and safe learning environment.

• To develop an individual's self-esteem and respect for others.

• To have a complete and consistent method for dealing with incidents of bullying.

• To understand the different types of bullying and hold a consistent definition of what bullying is.

• To ensure all members of our academy communities have a high level of awareness of the Anti-Bullying policy and its aims.

• To ensure parents and other members of the community are aware of our approach to bullying.

• To ensure all are aware of their roles and responsibilities to prevent and tackle bullying.

• To resolve bullying, where possible, by means of reconciliation, support, or where necessary sanction.

• This policy is underpinned by a legal framework and we are aware of our duty to prevent bullying in our academies, specifically including:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006

- The Education (Independent School standards) Regulations 2014

- The Equality Act 2010

- The Children Act 1989

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

## 3.0    Definitions: what is bullying?

3.1    Bullying is behaviour by an individual, or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual, or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups; for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. As such, our emphasis on creating a positive culture of acceptance is vitally important in tackling potential bullying.

3.2    Ensuring immediate physical safety is a first priority for all our academies; however, emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical and, therefore, the sanction for repeated emotional bullying may be as severe as for physical bullying.

3.3    It is our belief, as a Trust and within all our academies, that bullying usually involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways: it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone); derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate individuals or groups.  It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically, socially or online.

3.4    Bullying can be:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Physical harm** | pushing, kicking, punching, pinching or any form of violence |
| **Verbal abuse** | name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and persistent teasing |
| **Cyber bullying** | sending harmful, or cruel, text or images using any area of the internet or mobile phones (see below for more detail) |
| **Emotional abuse** | tormenting, making fun of someone, humiliation, isolation by groups of students from groups or activities, destroying or spoiling work, dirty looks, spreading rumours, and demanding money |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Homophobic abuse** | unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, particularly related to sexuality. Using words such as 'gay' in a derogatory way |
| **Transphobic bullying** | unwanted physical contact and abusive comments, particularly in relation to sexuality or gender assignation |
| **Sexist bullying** | abusive comments, particularly related to gender or possibly reputational labelling (e.g. use of words like slag, slut) |
| **Sexual abuse** | unwanted physical contact and abusive comments, particularly of an inappropriate sexual nature. Could be online and involve the sharing of unwanted images or messages, often known as 'sexting'; sharing of images that the provider believed were private or because they believed they were in an intimate relationship |
| **Racist abuse** | racial taunts or jokes, graffiti, gestures, making fun of customs, music and accents. Refusing to work with someone of a different cultural background and use of slang names for a group of people defined by race or culture (even if these are apparently used by the group themselves in popular music culture) |

3.5     Bullying is often a series of apparently minor incidents. Tackling these minor incidents will reduce the occurrence of more major or persistent bullying. More minor incidents include:

- name calling and looks

- borrowing equipment

- one student intimidating another in order to copy homework, spoiling another student's work, pushing in at the dinner queue

- groups of students isolating another by not letting him or her join in, forcing students to give up their place at a computer

## 4.0     Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying can happen at all times of the day with a potentially bigger audience because of the nature of on-line communication. Cyber-bullying is the most common form of bullying that academies now face. We believe that any act of intimidation that occurs between members of our academy communities is our business and we will be dealt with, often with the support of families. We are conscious that, while not all cyber-bullying is criminal, there are laws that can apply in terms of threats, or harassment, and we will involve the police when this is suspected. The Education Act 2011 gives those authorised by the headteacher the power to seize and examine data, or files, and delete these where there is good reason to do so. We take seriously our duty to tackle cyber-bullying and we will exercise this power when necessary. If we discover, or suspect, pornographic material or the sharing of images of children, we will immediately hand the device to the police.

## 5.0     Signs and symptoms

5.1     Here are a number of possible signs and behaviours which might indicate a student is being bullied:

- being frightened of journeying to and from the academy

- unwillingness to come to the academy

- withdrawn, isolated behaviour

- taking an unusual route to the academy

- becomes easily distressed and / or stops eating

- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

- complaining about missing possessions

- begins to truant

- feels ill in the morning

- attempts to self-harm

- difficulty sleeping

- has unexplained scratches, bruises and cuts

- attempts to gain money for unusual requests (stealing is possible)

- academy work begins to deteriorate

- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable

- bullying other students

- refusal to talk about the problem

- damaged or incomplete work

- refusing to work in a group or with another student

5.2     Whatever the intensity of the bullying, staff should intervene. All staff should be vigilant at all times. Every incident, however minor it may seem, is crucial for the student involved. Non-intervention condones the bullying. Staff must never ignore so called 'banter' between groups or individuals.

## 6.0 Self-referral

Children must feel confident that, if they feel unsafe or that they are being bullied, they can come forward and will be listened to. Any child can come forward to speak with any member of staff. All self-referrals must be recorded with actions taken and families must be contacted. In most cases, the member of staff that the referral is made to should speak to the Head of Year or phase leader who will decide on the appropriate course of action. If children do not feel confident that they can come forward physically, they can email members of staff.

## 7.0 Roles and responsibilities

### 7.1 All staff

All staff must be responsive to allegations of bullying and be clear that no issue is too small. It is essential that students have the confidence that all allegations are taken seriously and acted upon. The incident will always be investigated and recorded.

- The priority is to give protection and support to the victim.

- Staff will seek advice, if necessary, from their line-manager on how to proceed.

- Staff must make it clear that the bully's behaviour is totally unacceptable – it is important that disapproval is explained in a calm and rational way – avoid bullying the bully.

- The priority is to give protection and support to the victim.

- Investigations will be made to ascertain the reasons for the bully's behaviour and, if possible, action taken to alter the behaviour of the bully or bullies.

- The victims of bullying should receive support and help to develop strategies for dealing with bullying.  In particular, attempts need to be made to rebuild the self-esteem of victims of bullying.

- An incident of bullying must be reported to form tutors / advisors / class teacher and also be recorded on SIMS by the Head of Year / phase leader with what actions have been taken.

- Victims of bullying may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied – they feel powerless and vulnerable – self-esteem can be badly damaged, so it is essential that self-confidence is re-established through appropriate follow-up work, including counselling (or peer mediation for minor friendship problems where appropriate).

- Victims must be reassured that, should any incident occur, that they must come forward again and that any escalation or repetition will be taken extremely seriously.

- The bully will be supported in recognising their anit-social behaviour and offering support to modify that behaviour.

- Sanctions, if appropriate, will be decided on the individual incidents and circumstances.

- Parents will always be informed of the incident and the outcome.

- After an incident, there must be "follow-up" to ensure that the problem does not re-surface. Experience suggests that bullying will not take place again if students know that there will be follow-up. This should take place some 2 weeks after the initial incident and then perhaps some further a term later.

- In extreme cases, the police will be informed.

### 7.2 All students

We expect our students to report instances of bullying, no matter how small, and we constantly educate them on the effects of bullying on the individual.

### 7.3 The Principal and governing body

The Principal, held to account by the governing body, has to ensure the academy is meeting its duty to prevent bullying in their academy. They must ensure that this statutory policy is reviewed annually and that it is up to date and reflects the most recent advice and legislative framework. The Principal has the right to exclude a persistent bully and will do so if they have evidence that the actions of an individual are undermining the safety of others (see Exclusion policy and Positive Behaviour policy).

### 7.4 Parents

All parents sign our 3-way partnership when their child enters the academy. We expect parents to work with us in tackling bullying and in upholding our positive culture. Our success as a Trust is built on this 3-way relationship between the home, academy and child.

## 8.0 Sanctions

Depending on the severity of the bullying, a range of sanctions are available:

- the bully (bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologise; however, other consequences may also take place and, if possible, the students will be reconciled

- conciliation and reconciliation will be entirely determined by the victim and they should be given time to consider whether they wish a meeting to take place. Conciliation or restorative conversations are rarely in place of a sanction which may include:

- removal from class

- internal exclusion

- withholding participation in academy teams, events or trips

- in serious or on-going cases, fixed term or even permanent exclusion will be considered

- police involvement

## 9.0    Support for the victim

In most cases, support can occur within the academy with a designated member of staff that the victim feels comfortable talking to. It is important that, even when a matter appears to be resolved, the member of staff checks in regularly with the victim; initially on a weekly or daily basis (depending on the severity), but then on a termly basis. Most cases of bullying are dealt with swiftly and with no re-occurrence; however, it is vital that the victim understands that any re-occurrence must be reported and that it will be taken seriously. Depending on the severity of the bullying, the student may need counselling either in the academy or through an outside agency such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). This may be more likely if the child already has additional needs or previous mental health issues.

## 10.0   Bullying within academy premises

### 10.1    Serious bullying incidents in a classroom

If a serious bullying incident occurs in a classroom, when a teacher needs assistance, initially heads of department, heads of year or phase leaders should be used. Sensitivity towards the victim must be exercised in order that he or she is not further embarrassed in front of his or her peers. Similarly, the bully should not be given the opportunity to become a 'hero'. Teachers will follow the usual sanction table.

### 10.2    Serious bullying incidents outside the classroom

Appropriate intervention is vital and the victim must be given support and protection. Names or recognisable features of those involved should be obtained and the victim should be allowed to leave or be taken away from the scene – it may be appropriate to take them to the medical room for first aid. If necessary, help should be obtained from a head of year, phase leader or senior leader. Information should be recorded immediately following the academy's behavioural system. Should the bullying incident be severe, it may be helpful to seek the advice and support of the Police Liaison Officer – this must be done through a head of year.

## 11.0   Safe havens

Students must be aware of places where they feel safe and can go to during non-teaching time. Students can go to the heads of year / phase leader office, the library, Individual Needs / Mountain Rescue or the medical room, if they need sanctuary. They should be aware of whom they can contact for support at any time during the day. This can be any member of staff or a member of the peer mentoring team. Any child that has been subjected to bullying will have a nominated member of staff who they feel comfortable talking to.

## 12.0   Parental involvement

Following any incident, parents of both bullies and victims should be made aware of the situation and how their actions could help. Form tutors and class teachers, in consultation with heads of year and phase leaders, should involve parents at an early stage whenever it appears that there may be a problem. At times, restorative meetings involving parents can be used; however, these must be handled with skill and with the consent of all parties.

## 13.0   Safeguarding and bullying

Bullying is not always a safeguarding issue; however, the academy and staff need to be aware that there may be times when it is. Peer on peer abuse is an increasing concern and is referred to in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy as an issue that all staff must be aware of. When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the academy staff should discuss concerns with the academy's designated safeguarding lead and report through CPOMS. Concerns must also be reported to children's social care (see Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 Part 1).

## 14.0   Academy anti-bullying strategies

### 14.1    Bullying at our academies will not be tolerated and this message will be reinforced regularly. It is important that tackling bullying is seen as an on-going process which involves all members of the academy community.

### 14.2    The message will be delivered through:

• year group assemblies from heads of year and senior leaders

• PSHE schemes of work, posters and advice leaflets

• every form teacher / advisor and class teacher

- students should be constantly made aware that we, as an academy, we will not tolerate bullying. They must constantly be told that they should not suffer and that any teacher or supervisor is prepared to help. They should always be encouraged to talk to someone
- duty staff and lunchtime supervisor should be particularly vigilant when patrolling the academy and playgrounds
- subject teachers will sometimes be able to incorporate an 'anti-bully' message in their lessons, e.g. in literature, drama, discussions of current affairs etc.
- confidential listening area in pastoral areas; for example, IN / Mountain Rescue office
- positive relationship support programmes in place e.g. positive leadership skills, anger management, assertiveness etc.
- cyber bullying special assemblies and lessons – students to understand the risks of social networking sites and ways to report cyber bullying
- continuing professional development for all staff

## Appendix 1 – Useful contacts

**Help organisations:**

KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline        0845 1 205 204

Childline        0800 1111

Parentline Plus        0808 800 2222

Bullying Online        www.bullying.co.uk

**Legislative links:**

- Schools' duty to promote good behaviour (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89)
- Power to tackle poor behaviour outside school (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89(5))
- The Equality Act 2010

**Legislative links:**

- **The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA):** founded in 2002 by the NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the ABA brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.
- **Beatbullying:** a bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for parents, Beatbullying has developed the Cybermentors peer support programme for young people affected by cyberbullying.
- **Kidscape:** charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection, which provides advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for academy staff, and assertiveness training for young people.
- **Restorative Justice Council:** includes best-practice guidance for practitioners.

**Cyber-bullying:**

- **ChildNet International:** specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.

## Appendix 2 – Anti-bullying flow chart

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                              │  Bullying issue / incident │
                              └─────────────────────────┘
                          ↙                           ↘
        ┌──────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────┐
        │ Member of staff informed │      │ Student / peer mentor informed │
        └──────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────────┘
                  ↓                                    ↓
        ┌──────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────┐
        │     Details taken     │          │     Details taken     │
        └──────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────┘
```

Are the students from one tutor group / class?  — **Yes** / **No**

Form tutor / class teacher to discuss with HoY and interview students

HoY / phase leader informed and interview students

Parents informed

Has the bullying stopped? — **Yes** → Reviewed at appropriate time interval / **No**

**Relevant reconciliation, mediation or santion by the appropriate people:**
- friendship contract
- detention
- loss of ICT right
- attendance on social development programme
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion
- support from academy / police / liaison officer
- behaviour support plan

Interviewed by HoY / phase leader

Parents seen

Has the bullying stopped? — **Yes** → Reviewed at appropriate time interval / **No**

**Appropriate sanction:**
- friendship contract
- detention
- loss of ICT right
- attendance on social development programme
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion
- support from academy / police / liaison officer
- behaviour support plan

Refer to Vice Principal

Has the bullying stopped? — **Yes** → Reviewed at appropriate time interval / **No**

**Appropriate sanction:**
- attendance on social development programme
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion
- support from academy / police / liaison officer
- behaviour support plan

Refer to Vice Principal or Principal

- fixed term exclusion
- student referral unit
- ESW
- educational pyschologist

Has the bullying stopped? — **Yes** → Reviewed at appropriate time interval / **No** → Exclusion