

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy provides a framework to guide academy staff and strengthen decision making as they aim to ensure their academies are free from bullying.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011

2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that all of our pupils can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Great Academies Trust seeks to establish a learning environment in which everyone feels able to enjoy and achieve and where success is recognised and rewarded.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to

- Adopt a definition of bullying that is agreed across the Trust and accepted by each academy community;

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- Support academy leaders to promote positive action to prevent bullying through the curriculum, assemblies, academy council, anti-bullying weeks, restorative practices and related activities;
- Support academy leaders in raising awareness of bullying and promotes positive relationships based on mutual respect
- Support academy leaders in establishing a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur
- Ensure fair treatment for all, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or sexuality and encourage understanding and tolerance of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy is guided by legislative duties, national guidance and the GAET Vision and Values

Key legislative duties and national guidance

- [The Equality Act 2010](#) which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society;
- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2017, DfE](#), which describes how, by effectively preventing and tackling bullying, schools can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.
- [DfE \(2018\) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'](#)
- [DfE \(2018\) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'](#)

GAET Vision and Values

Vision

“Great Academies Education Trust will be a truly outstanding, outward facing multi-academy trust supporting its academies, from their starting points, to become outstanding.

All pupils will make exceptional academic progress in all subjects and regardless of age or stage will be work and college ready.”

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Our academies will be places where pupils are valued as individuals, where they will have opportunities to achieve highly, lead strongly and develop into confident, responsible and successful young adults.”

We show all members of our academy community they are valued, in order that they can, and want to, treat each other with respect, irrespective of their characteristics. We work with pupils, families and other stakeholders to enable all of our pupils to develop as individuals, which in turn, supports them to make outstanding academic progress.

Values

“All individuals will embody our values -

Genuine - mutually trusting, open, honest and reflective.

Respect(ful) to all.

Excellent at what they do, striving for excellence and intolerant of mediocrity.

Achievement focussed-understanding that academic excellence is the goal and high aspirations key to each child achieving their academic potential.

Together- believing that we can make the biggest difference when we work as a strong team.”

We are genuine in our conversations about bullying. In a context of honesty and respectfulness, we discuss bullying and how it can be eradicated. We do not tolerate bullying of any kind and our actions aim to inculcate excellent behaviour. We demonstrate to pupils how building positive relationships can support their learning and progress, in order that they achieve their academic potential. We work together with our pupils, their families, and other agencies to support this.

4. EQUALITY

The Great Academies Education Trust ensures that pupils can attend school without fear of bullying. We recognise the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We do not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. This is in line with the Equality Act 2010 and covers both direct and indirect discrimination.

5. DEFINITION

5.1 For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

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5.2 Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

3. Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitude and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

4. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.

6. TYPES OF BULLYING

6.1 Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything.

6.2 Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

6.3 Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)

Cyber Bullying is, for the most part, using social media in an inappropriate manner relating to offensive messages or images (individually or within group settings). It can also be mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

4. **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

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5. **Homophobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
6. **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person’s gender ‘variance’ or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
7. **Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
8. **Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
9. **Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND, a disability or mental health issues. It can also include bullying aimed towards asylum seekers and refugees, in relation to body image, towards Looked After children, relating to Religion and belief, towards Young carers or as a result of social and economic prejudice.
10. **Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

It is important to understand that bullying is not an odd occasional falling out with friends, occasional name-calling, arguments, or when the occasional ‘joke’ is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child’s development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the incidents of name calling or falling out. Children learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships. However, the Trust takes all incidents which undermine the safety and well-being of students seriously and will ensure that they are addressed through other policies outside of this one.

7. STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The academy understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

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- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2. The academy understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the academy to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

3. The Principal will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Principal understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

4. Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

8. PREVENTION

8.1 The academy clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement which is regularly promoted across the whole school.

8.2 All reported or investigated instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff.

8.3 Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work.

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- 8.4 All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the curriculum.
- 8.5 Diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- 8.6 Seating plans will be organised and altered in line with school policy in a way that prevents instances of bullying.
- 8.7 Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.
- 8.8 All members of the academy are made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it.
- 8.9 All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.
- 8.10 At academy level, designated spaces such as pastoral office or student services are available for pupils to go to during free time if they feel at risk of bullying or wish to speak with a member of staff.
- 8.11 Staff supervising the area will speak to pupils to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.
- 8.12 Class teachers will also offer an ‘open door’ policy allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.
- 8.13 The academy will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.
- 8.14 The academy will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn’t negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

9. SIGNS OF BULLYING

- 9.1 Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:
- Being frightened to travel to or from school
 - Asking to be driven to school
 - Unwillingness to attend school

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- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

2. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.

3. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

4. In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the pupil becoming aggravated
- They have been the victim of domestic abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed

9.5 If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's form tutor or key stage pastoral lead who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

10. PREVENTING CHILD ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

10.1 The academy has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

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- 10.2 Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.
- 10.3 Sexual harassment violates a child's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.
- 10.4 The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy outlines our stance on addressing child-on-child sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence be uncovered.
- 10.5 To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the academy will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE / RSE lessons.
- 10.6 The academy will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions. Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:
- Healthy relationships
 - Respectful behaviour
 - Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
 - Body confidence and self-esteem
 - Prejudiced behaviour
 - That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
 - Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

11. CYBER BULLYING

- 11.1 The academy has a zero-tolerance approach to cyber bullying.
- 11.2 The academy views cyber bullying in the same light as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in section 13 this policy if they become aware of any incidents.
- 11.3 The academy will support pupils who have been victims of cyber bullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped

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- 11.4 In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the academy has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no requirement to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.
- 11.5 If an electronic device is confiscated by a member of staff, and there is reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to a potential criminal offence, the device must be given to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.
- 11.6 If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to a criminal offence, the Principal will decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of the relevant policies.

12. PROCEDURES

- 12.1 Each academy will treat seriously all incidents which are brought to the attention of staff and the following action will be taken without delay:
- 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. Where this is the case, staff should discuss with the academy's designated safeguarding lead.
 - Following a report of an incident being received, the pupil who maybe being bullied will be talked with privately by an appropriate member of staff.
 - The victim will be listened to and reassured.
 - A record of the incident will be documented in line with each academy's procedures, including a record made by the pupil, if appropriate.
 - Academy staff will talk to all pupils involved individually.
 - Any other evidence will be sought, for example any CCTV footage, social media posts, text messages.
 - Parents/carers of all relevant pupils will be notified and kept informed, the being taken by the academy will be explained, and the reasons for them, referring to this policy.
 - Support and consequences will be decided upon dependent on the individual circumstances.
 - The situation will be monitored and further action taken where deemed necessary.

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