Anti-Bullying Policy

Scope

At Stockport Academy we are committed to working with children, staff, governors and parents/carers to create a school community where bullying is not accepted. This policy sets out the expectations of behaviour at Stockport Academy and its approach in ensuring that all students are safe from bullying behaviour and able to thrive in a positive learning environment in keeping with its core aims and values to bring out the 'best in everyone'.

Vision

At our school the safety, welfare and well-being of all students and staff is a key priority. Our school is a place where people have the right to be themselves, to be included and to learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will be identified and thoughtfully dealt with at our school. We take all incidences of bullying seriously and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and challenge any bullying, harassment or discrimination.

We actively promote values of respect and equality and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our students to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in 21st Century Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our students by society, when they enter Further Education and beyond in the world of work or further study.

We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying and regularly monitor, review and assess the impact of our preventative measures.

Stockport Academy believes that its students have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied in keeping with its philosophy to bring out the 'best in everyone'

The policy is based on the school's basic principles of 'believe, aspire, achieve and respect' in its aim to prevent bullying incidents and act appropriately and fairly towards both the victim and the aggressor should incidents occur.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is defined as:

'Bullying is the purposeful choosing of behaviours that threaten, intimidate or hurt someone, which is often, but not always, repeated over time, which involves a real or perceived power imbalance'.

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be permitted. Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends or during the holidays, or in the wider community. The nature of cyber bullying in particular means that it can impact on students' well-being beyond the school day.

We will use support systems when it becomes apparent that any incident of bullying is having an impact on an individual and/or the school community. Bullying is a clear breach of the Academy's Behaviour Policy and the full range of sanctions available throughout the Academy may be used to deal with cases of bullying where found and confirmed. It should be noted that although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Malicious accusations of bullying behaviour, if found to be untrue, will be treated very seriously and involve serious disciplinary sanction.

Who is bullied?

Anybody could be subject to bullying at any time in their life. It is not only something that affects children and young people.

A person is bullied when, either as an individual or part of a group, she or he suffers in any way from the direct result of intentional and persistent harassment and/or victimisation by another individual or group.

A person who has been bullied may commonly find it difficult to combat victim behaviour or report their experiences to those who may be able to help them.

Vulnerable Students

It is also the case that some children with protected characteristics are more vulnerable to potential abuse by peers and Stockport Academy recognises the need to acknowledge that some children are more at risk of potential targeting by bullying behaviour. The Academy accepts the definition of bullying as written above and also acknowledges what Preventing and tackling bullying, advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017) says about the need to monitor, especially certain groups of children:

"Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of differences. These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition, children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all."

The Equality Act 2010 also stipulates that schools are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.

Factors that can make people vulnerable

Children and young people who are at most increased risk of causing harm (the Harmer/perpetrator) or being harmed (the Harmed/victim) through bullying are those who:

- are in foster care or residential homes (looked after children);
- are young carers;
- have experienced physical or emotional trauma;
- have suffered bereavement;
- have suffered domestic violence;
- are understood to be at risk from a range of safeguarding or child protection issues i.e. safeguarding / organised crime groups;
- are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning of their sexuality or gender;
- have specific special educational needs (especially on the autistic spectrum);
- have a disability or impairment;
- are from minority ethnic backgrounds;
- are refugees or asylum seekers;
- speak a first language other than English;
- have experienced poverty or deprivation;
- have started a school or activity group mid term; and/or
- have a parent/carer that was a victim of bullying.

Identifying and supporting vulnerable children

We work closely in school to identify particularly vulnerable groups, such as minority ethnic groups, travellers, refugees, LGBT students, midterm arrivals, students who transfer late into the school, children or young people in care, young carers, teenage parents and those with other special needs who may find it more difficult to build and maintain friendships.

As a school, we plan positive action to support these students with all relevant staff members and provide additional support where necessary, for example peer support through buddy schemes and helping them to access clubs and out of school provision.

Types of Bullying

No form of bullying will be accepted, and all incidents will be taken seriously.

Bullying can be based on any of the following:

- Race (racist bullying);
- Religion or belief;
- Culture or class;
- Gender (sexist bullying);
- Sexual orientation (homophobic, or biphobic bullying);
- Gender identity (transphobic bullying);
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability;
- Appearance or health conditions;

- Related to home or other personal situation; and/or
- Related to another vulnerable group of people.

Methods of bullying

There are a number of bullying behaviours that can be summarised as:

- Physical aggression – hitting, kicking, tripping up, spitting, taking or damaging property, using threats or force in any way, intimidation or demands for money or goods;
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, teasing, 'jokes', mocking, taunting, gossiping, secrets, threats, reference to upsetting events e.g. bereavement, divorce, being in care;
- Non-verbal – staring, body language, gestures;
- Indirect – excluding, ostracising, rumours and stories, emails, chat rooms, messaging phones, notes, inappropriate gestures;
- Cyber – text messaging, internet chat rooms, the use of social media applications such as Snapchat, Instagram or WhatsApp, the misuse of camera or video facilities (including the self-generated inappropriate images), offensive questions and nasty inbox messages; or
- Parental incitement.

The Malicious Communications Act 1988 states that it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

We acknowledge that some acts of bullying will constitute a criminal offence and, in these cases, other organisations will need to be contacted e.g. the Police or Social Care.

Peer on peer abuse

When children and young people harm others this is referred to as peer on peer abuse, which can take various forms, including:

- serious bullying (including cyber-bullying);
- relationship abuse;
- domestic violence;
- child sexual exploitation;
- youth and serious youth violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour; and/or
- gender based violence.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as peer on peer abuse and incidents that would be considered as bullying, sexual experimentation, etc. Assessments of such incidents must be made on a case by case basis. Our school has a clear pathway for dealing with such incidents.

Prejudice-based incidents

A prejudice-based incident is often a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in school, with the Principal

regularly reporting incidents to the governing body. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying intervention.

Derogatory language

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be permitted. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored on Arbor and/or Class Charts and follow up actions and consequences, if appropriate, will be taken in respect of students and staff found using any such language. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language using informal mechanisms such as a classroom log. Staff are encouraged to report the use of derogatory language through their own school systems.

Sexual violence

Keeping children safe in education (September 2022) states that it is important that schools are aware of sexual violence and the fact that children can and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and it can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence in this we do so in context of child-on-child sexual violence and links to sexual violence offences which are also part of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This includes rape, assault by penetration. Sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Keeping children safe in education 2022 (September 2022) states that when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside/outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated. Examples of sexual harassment include sexual comments, sexual jokes, physical behaviour eg deliberately brushing past someone, online sexual harassment, sharing of nude/semi-nude images and videos, up skirting.

Possible indicators of bullying

We recognise that the following behaviours may suggest someone is being bullied or is bullying (the list is not exhaustive):

- disturbed sleep;
- bed-wetting;
- head and stomach aches;
- problems with concentration;
- changes in behaviour and attitude;
- truanting;
- bullying other children;
- damaged or missing clothes/money/property;
- asking for more money than usual or stealing money;
- withdrawn or changes in their usual behaviour patterns or attitude;
- distressed or emotional and finds it hard to articulate their feelings;
- changes in their eating patterns;
- changes in their online activity;
- shows evidence of self-harming or even for extreme cases potential suicide;
- is unusually tired without a reasonable explanation;
- unexplained bruises or marks on their body, (some may refuse to change for PE);
- repeatedly comes to school without dinner money or a packed lunch; or
- seems afraid to be alone and requires more adult interaction.

School initiatives to prevent and tackle bullying

We use a range of measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- The school values of equality and respect are embedded across the curriculum to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible;
- The PSHE programme of study includes opportunities for students to understand about different types of bullying and what they can do to respond and prevent bullying;
- Proactive teaching and learning around how to build and maintain healthy relationships, including explicit work on how to appropriately manage conflict within relationships;
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and students across the school;
- Leadership groups such as; Gold Ties, Peer Mentors, Prefects, Anti-Bullying mentors offer support to all students, including those who may have been the target of bullying;
- Students are continually involved in developing school-wide anti-bullying initiatives through consultation with groups such as our leadership groups as well as our school council and/or through our student survey/student voice opportunities;
- Diversity is celebrated across the school through diverse displays, books and images. The whole school participates in events including Anti-Bullying Week, Black History Month and LGBT History Month, Mental Health Awareness Week;
- School assemblies help raise students' awareness of bullying and derogatory language;
- Restorative Approaches provide support for the harmed and harmer plus any other affected parties involved in any bullying incident.
- Bullying intervention courses ran by Positive behaviour mentors.
- Pastoral intervention and support from year teams.

Reporting – roles and responsibilities

Senior Leaders

The Principal and Senior Leaders have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff and that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of all young people.

Staff

All school staff, both teaching and non-teaching have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the school's measures to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the students involved and inform relevant staff in line with school guidance.

Non-school staff, volunteers and outside organisation (Sports Coaches, music teachers, support services etc) also are made aware of the school's policy and the reporting of incidents.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give school staff powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

The Equality Act 2010 also stipulates that schools are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.

Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers should look out for potential signs of bullying such as distress, lack of concentration, feigning illness or other unusual behaviour and should encourage their child not to retaliate but, to support and encourage them to report the bullying when it occurs.

When parents/carers have concerns, we would encourage them to contact the Pastoral Team at the earliest opportunity. We find that it is much more effective to speak to the school when an incident occurs and not to post it on social media as this may affect and delay any investigations and outcomes.

Parents and carers can report an incident of bullying to the school either in person, or by phoning or emailing the school office enquiries@stockport-academy.org or a member of the Pastoral Team on 0161 286 0330.

Parents and Carers must also give due regard to the 'Home School Agreement', which can be found on our website.

Students should not take part in any kind of bullying and should watch out for signs of bullying among their peers. When finding themselves alongside an incident of bullying, they should attempt to offer support to the victim and, if possible, help them to tell a trusted adult.

Dealing with an Incident

When bullying has been reported, the following actions will be taken:

- Staff will investigate and record the bullying on the schools' incident reporting form and also record the incident centrally on Arbor.
- Staff will offer support to all involved within a bullying incident. Individual meetings will be held with harmer & the harmed to devise a plan of action that ensures all feel listened to and supported and feel safe and reassured that with support there can be a resolution. Action plans will be developed, making use of Pastoral support / Mentors.
- Staff will decide whether to inform parents or carers and where necessary involve them in any plan of action;
- Staff will pro-actively respond to these plans, with the harmer and harmed parties possibly requiring support and work with other colleagues as appropriate;
- Restorative meetings will be offered for any incident, this includes race or hate, homophobic and transphobic incidents. Please note that participation in any restorative repair meeting should be voluntary;
- Staff will assess whether any other services (such as Police or the Local Authority) need to be involved, particularly when actions take place outside of school;
- Designated school staff will monitor incident reporting forms and information recorded on Arbor, analysing and evaluating the results; and
- Designated school staff will produce termly reports summarising the information, which the Principal will report to the governing body.

Safeguarding procedures must be followed when child protection concerns arise.

Recording of Incidents

We maintain a system of data collection and analysis in relation to any reported incidents of bullying in school. Termly feedback is made available for governors via the Principal report.

All staff will use the agreed reporting format to alert the Principal and the Vice Principal (Pastoral) matters of any bullying related incidents.

Training and Awareness

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all school staff, both teaching and non-teaching (including midday supervisors, caretakers, librarians, outside agencies and volunteers, parents/carers and governors) receive regular training on all aspects of the anti-bullying policy, including proactive healthy relationship work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Vice Principal (Pastoral) is responsible for reporting to the governing body (and the Local Authority where applicable) on how the policy is being enforced and upheld, via the termly report. The governors are in turn responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy via the termly report, by in school monitoring such as learning walks, and focus groups with students.

The policy is reviewed every 12 months, and a committee set up to oversee the review process.

If any further information or clarification is required please contact Jenny McNulty, Assistant Principal at the Academy.

Agreed by Stockport Academy LGB October 2024

Review   September 2025

Links to other school policies

This anti-bullying policy links to a range of policies/strategies, including:

- Equality Objectives
- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy

This policy was updated with regard to the DfE guidelines:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2022)
- Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (November 2014)
- No place for bullying: Ofsted (June 2012)