Anti-Bullying Policy

About this policy

At George Spencer Academy we aim to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can achieve within a supportive environment. Every student has the right to be safe and happy in school, and to be protected when they are feeling vulnerable. This policy provides grounds for complaint against bullying, giving students, parents and staff the confidence to raise the alarm in the knowledge that concerns, or incidents, will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying is a whole school issue. As part of the 'Climate for Learning' agenda, therefore all members of teaching and support staff have a responsibility to ensure that students can learn in a non-threatening environment. In line with the school's approach to other aspects of behaviour management, it is important to seek to prevent bullying rather than simply seeking to respond to it when it occurs. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the target. It also affects those other children who watch and may get drawn in.   The academy is aware of its legal obligations and role within the local community supporting parents and working with other agencies outside the school where appropriate. The academy also recognises the needs of the target and the bullies and cases will be handled with sensitivity and discretion.

Students are encouraged to report bullying as staff can only act if they know that incidents have occurred. As an academy we aim to:
- Raise awareness of bullying within the school by creating an ethos of disclosure, openness and trust between students, staff and parents.
- Develop a centralised system for reporting, recording and reacting to bullying incidents.
- Regularly monitor, analyse and evaluate incidents of bullying within school with a view to responding to specific trends.

Our Aim

This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from:
- DfE guidance, "preventing and tackling bullying" https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf
- Members of staff - though regular agenda items at staff meetings, consultation documents, surveys, etc.
- Governors - discussions at governors meetings, training, etc.
- Parents/carers - parents will be encouraged to contribute by taking part in written consultations, parent forums and parent questionnaires.
- Children and young people - pupils contribute to the development of the policy through the school council, prefects, etc.

This policy is available:
- Online on the George Spencer Academy website http://www.george-spencer.notts.sch.uk/
- From the school office
- A pupil friendly version will be on display around the academy

Definition of Bullying

The, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or online.
https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/what-bullying

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?
- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the target to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyberbullying. If the target might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

What does bullying look like?
Bullying can include:
- name calling
- taunting
- mocking
- making offensive comments
- physical assault
- taking or damaging belongings
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging and e mailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
- producing offensive graffiti
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

Where does bullying take place?
Bullying is not confined to the school premises. Advice for school leaders to help with this problem and its effects on children acknowledges that it may also persist outside school, in the local community, on the journey to and from school and may continue into Further Education. The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims (cyber-bullying). Bullying can take place between:
- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

Why are children and young people bullied?

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. Specific types of bullying include:

- o Prejudice crime related bullying of children with special educational needs or disabilities, homophobic and transphobic bullying or related to race, religion or culture
- o bullying related to appearance or health
- o bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- o sexist or sexual bullying.

Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language

Homophobic language is terms of abuse used towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people or those thought to be LGB. It is also used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way or have gay friends, family members or their parents/carers are gay.

Dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexuality they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of homophobic language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any homophobic intent. Persistent use of homophobic language or homophobic bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

Cyberbullying (online)

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their target. We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet and encourage good online behaviour. Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside the academy we will offer support and guidance to parents and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying the same way as any other forms of bullying.

Roles and responsibilities

The Head teacher – Has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies and appointing an Anti-bullying coordinator who will have general responsibility for handling the implementation of this policy.

The Anti –bullying Coordinator in our school is: - Mr Kris Hartley supported by all Directors of Learning and Pupil support assistants.

The responsibilities are:-

- o Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- o Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- o Managing bullying incidents
- o Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- o Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- o Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

The nominated Governor with the responsibility for Anti- bullying (Behaviour) is: - Mrs Caroline Bartliff.

Reporting and responding to bullying

Our academy has clear and well publicised systems to report bullying for the whole community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people) this includes those who are the targets of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour (bystanders).

We ensure that students can express their concerns in the following ways:
- Contact with Learning Manager, Pastoral Support, Director of Learning or Mr Kris Hartley
- Email / Text reporting system - enabling students and parents / carers to report incidents of bullying at any time. Reports are dealt with as soon as possible.
  - **Contact e-mail: stopbullying@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk**
  - **Contact text: 07969203860**
- Peer Mentors – Students in Years 10 who are trained in the mentoring of Years 7 and 8. Mentors are available in designated tutor slots to talk with the younger students and counsel them in any issues they may have, including bullying. Information is then circulated to relevant staff.

How to report as a parent/carer

Concerns about bullying must be reported to the academy – they will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The process is as follows:
- Reports to the designated anti-bullying contact can be made by telephone, e-mail, text message or in person via an appointment.
- Contact will be made with the parent within 24 hours of the report being made to acknowledge receipt of the alleged incident and provide an update of action taken so far.
- Details of any incidents will be completed on an incident form and subsequently entered onto a computer database. The form will then be passed immediately to the relevant member of staff for action.
- The matter will be investigated as appropriate. Depending on the incidents reported this may include collating statements from relevant students, discussions between students and possible apologies, meeting with parents, meeting with the School's Police Liaison Officer.
- The actions and outcomes will then be entered onto the incident form and paper copies will be filed in the student's records.
- Incidents will be monitored and on a half-termly basis, analysed for emerging patterns. Parents of targets will be contacted at the end of subsequent half terms to check that the problem has not resurfaced.

The academy hopes that parents and carers will take all reasonable steps to assist in the implementation of this policy and, in particular that they will:
- Be aware of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Maintain contact with the academy over any reported incidents of bullying involving their child and seek to work co-operatively with the school to resolve the problem.

These responsibilities are consistent with those set out in the home - school agreement.

Procedures

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated involving all parties. The steps we will take when an incident of bullying is reported are set out below. All staff are aware of and follow the same procedures:

- o Interviewing all parties
- o Informing parents
- o Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. These are graduated according to the seriousness of the incident but should send out a message that bullying is unacceptable
- o Responses may also vary according to the type of bullying and may involve other agencies where appropriate
- o Follow up especially keeping in touch with the person who reported the situation, parents/carers. This may include having a clear complaints procedure for parents who are not satisfied with the academy's actions
- o A range of responses and support appropriate to the situation - solution focused, restorative approach, circle of friends, individual work with target, perpetrator, referral to outside agencies if appropriate
- o Liaising with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the school premises i.e. in the case of cyberbullying or hate crime.
- o Using the CAF process where appropriate to involve other agencies who may be able to support.

Recording bullying and evaluating the policy

Bullying incidents will be recorded by the member of staff who deals with the incident and this will be stored by the Anti-bullying coordinator. The information stored will be used to ensure individuals incidents are followed up. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy. This information will be discussed by staff in half termly meetings. This information will be presented to the governors as part of the annual report. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Strategies for preventing bullying

As part of our ongoing commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils we at George Spencer Academy we have developed the following strategies to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying behaviour.

At George Spencer Academy we seek to create an ethos of awareness, openness and disclosure regarding bullying through:

- o Year group assemblies and time with Learning Managers
- o Year 7 Growth Curriculum and pastoral time programme. Content includes what to do if bullying takes place, how to report bullying and learning strategies to help to deal with bullying incidents. In addition to this, all staff are encouraged to use other opportunities which may arise within their subject to reinforce the academy's position on bullying.
- o The voice of Pastoral Support team who are the first port of call to report alleged incidents. Pastoral Support also investigate alleged incidents and liaise with the relevant Learning Managers / Directors as appropriate.

- The School Council being involved in reviewing the anti-bullying policy
- 'Hands Off' Strategy
- Years 7,8 and 9 have a defined space for lunchtime recreation to enhance their sense of security and identity.
- Dedicated website and phone number to report issues regarding bullying.
- Students are encouraged to speak out to other adults
- Anti-Bullying Week. The week is early in the academic year (typically November) to reinforce the school's anti-bullying message and procedures early. Planning of the week involves the Student Leaders and includes the 'Stay Safe' assembly
- The introduction of the SQuid system of cashless catering as a strategy to reduce bullying as it removes the necessity for students to carry dinner money.

Additional prevention methods

1. Here are a number of strategies both as part of our curriculum and across the whole school including that we use to prevent acts of bullying:
   - Involvement in the Healthy Schools Programme
   - Anti-Bullying week annually in November.
   - PSHE/Citizenship lessons and cross curriculum.
   - Specific curriculum input on areas of concern such as Cyberbullying and internet safety
   - Student voice, school council
   - Peer mentoring schemes
   - Challenge days
2. Reactive programmes for vulnerable groups or groups involved in bullying. For example: -
   - Restorative Justice
   - Counselling and/or Mediation schemes
3. Support for parents/carers
   - Parent groups/extended schools
   - Parent information events/information
4. Support for all school staff
   - Staff training and development for all staff including those involved in lunchtime and before and after school activities

The following sanctions will be used as appropriate:
- Child spoken to by member of staff
- Liaison with parents
- Supervision at break and lunchtime
- Detentions
- Withdrawal from lessons
- Exclusions (fixed term or permanent)

It is useful to bear the following points in mind:
Working with children who are bullying
1. Be critical of the behaviour, **not** the person.
2. Offer opportunities to make amends and change behaviour.
Supporting the target
1. Provide protection, support and reassurance.
2. Help them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.

3. Help them to develop a more effective range of social skills.

Responsibilities of Students

At all times, students are expected to observe the principles of behaviour that underpin the school's behaviour policy. These are:

- o Allow teachers to teach and students to learn.
- o Respect the work of all members of the school community.
- o Respect people's safety, feelings and property.
- o Protect the school environment.

Students are expected to tell an adult if they have been bullied or if they have witnessed, or are aware of, the bullying of another student.

Reference documents

DfE guidance, Preventing and tackling bullying (last updated July 2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

DFE guidance, Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (last updated July 2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

DFE guidance, Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (last updated July 2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf

DFE Case studies, Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying (published June 2018)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/715359/Approaches_to_preventing_and_tackling_bullying_-_case_studies.pdf

DFE guidance, No place for Bullying (published June 2012)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413234/No_place_for_bullying.pdf

Useful organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.
https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

BullyingUK (part of family lives): A bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with families. They provide support via a dedicated helpline and further bespoke programs.
https://www.bullying.co.uk/

Childline: A charity who give advice and guidance as well as support for children and young adults. They offer a free, private and confidential service where you can talk about anything including any of the types of bullying mentioned in this policy.
https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.
https://www.childnet.com/

Digizen: provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.
https://www.digizen.org/

Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing 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 school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.
https://www.kidscape.org.uk/

The Diana Award: Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.
https://diana-award.org.uk/

The BIG Award: The Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) offer a national scheme and award for schools to tackle bullying effectively.
https://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.com/what-is-it/

Think U Know: resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

Restorative Justice Council: Includes best practice guidance for all forms of restorative practice including restorative justice.
https://restorativejustice.org.uk/