

1.1 PRINCIPLES

1.1.1 Everyone at a school within the Alban Academies Trust has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the AAT community be able to achieve their potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this from happening and obstructs equality of opportunity and is unacceptable in all schools within the AAT. It is everyone's responsibility to banish bullying and this policy contains guidelines for doing so. Our key aim is to prevent bullying by reinforcing a positive ethos and being proactive in our response to staff and student concerns.

1.1.2 Where bullying exists the victims must feel confident to activate individual school's anti-bullying systems. We aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied students and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school. We are a TELLING Trust. This means that *anyone* who knows or suspects that bullying is happening, is encouraged to tell a member of staff.

1.1.3 This document outlines how we make this possible in each of our schools.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

1.2.1 All governors, staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

1.2.2 All governors and staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported or suspected.

1.2.3 All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

1.2.4 As the Alban Academies Trust we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

1.3 ALBAN ACADEMIES TRUST STUDENT VOICE STATEMENT

1.3.1 Everyone at each of our schools is entitled to respect and courtesy.

It is important that we recognise bullying in all its forms.

Putting physical or mental pressure on another student, no matter what the reason, is bullying and we must all work together to prevent it.

1.3.1.1 We must not frighten others with threats or actions.

1.3.1.2 We must not spread hurtful gossip about others.

1.3.3.3 We must not be unkind and spiteful to others.

1.3.3.4 We must treat people, and their property, with respect, at all times.

1.3.3.5 We must do everything we can to stop bullying.

1.3.2 If you are being bullied tell someone who will listen and help. You can always talk to:

1.3.2.1 A teacher or the school nurse, *or if you prefer*

1.3.2.2 To any friend or relative

1.3.2.3 A Sixth Former or prefect

1.3.2.4 Anyone in a position to help

- 1.3.3 If you witness bullying, don't ignore it. You will be doing the right thing for the bully, the victim and yourself.
- 1.3.5 **Remember, a bully is a coward who relies on not being found out.**
- 1.3.6 If you are a bully, stop now – before you become an outcast

1.4 WHAT IS BULLYING?

- 1.4.1 While there is no single definition of bullying, the DFE identifies three points which most definitions share:
 - 1.4.1.1 The behaviour is intended to cause distress
 - 1.4.1.2 The behaviour is repeated
 - 1.4.1.3 There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s of bullying and the target
- 1.4.2 'Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.' (Safe to Learn, DFE 2007)
- 1.4.3 'People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop.' (Safe to Learn, DFE 2007)
- 1.4.4 All schools within the AAT work hard to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

1.5 Bullying can take place between students, between students and staff, and can include:

- 1.5.1 name-calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments
- 1.5.2 offensive graffiti
- 1.5.3 excluding people from groups
- 1.5.4 gossiping and spreading hurtful or untrue rumours
- 1.5.5 kicking, hitting, pushing
- 1.5.6 taking belongings
- 1.5.7 cyber bullying – including sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails or instant messages via the internet, setting up websites designed to embarrass or upset individuals or excluding them from social networking sites.

1.6 Students may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:

- 1.6.1 ethnic background, religion or culture
- 1.6.2 disability, special educational needs or a particular ability
- 1.6.3 sexual orientation
- 1.6.4 gender (including sexualised bullying)
- 1.6.5 size, appearance or health conditions
- 1.6.6 social or economic status (poverty, class)
- 1.6.7 age/maturity
- 1.6.8 home circumstances – certain groups such as students in public care, or young carers, or those with same sex parents/carers or whose parents/carers have mental health difficulties may be particularly vulnerable.

1.7 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

1.7.1 A student may display signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- 1.7.1.1 is frightened of walking to or from school
- 1.7.1.2 doesn't want to go to school on the school/public bus
- 1.7.1.3 begs to be driven to school
- 1.7.1.4 changes their usual routines
- 1.7.1.5 is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- 1.7.1.6 begins truanting
- 1.7.1.7 becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- 1.7.1.8 starts stammering
- 1.7.1.9 attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- 1.7.1.10 cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- 1.7.1.11 feels ill in the morning
- 1.7.1.12 begins to do poorly in school work
- 1.7.1.13 comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- 1.7.1.14 has possessions go 'missing'
- 1.7.1.15 asks for money or starts stealing money
- 1.7.1.16 has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- 1.7.1.17 has unexplained cuts or bruises
- 1.7.1.18 comes home starving
- 1.7.1.19 becomes aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable
- 1.7.1.20 is bullying other children or siblings
- 1.7.1.21 stops eating
- 1.7.1.22 is frightened to say what's wrong
- 1.7.1.23 gives improbable excuses for any of the above

1.7.2 These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

2 TRUST ARRANGEMENTS

This policy has been developed at Trust level and therefore covers policy that is relevant and followed by all the schools within the Alban Academies Trust. The appendices contain specific school level documents and detail of any differing procedures if applicable and relevant to this policy.

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the AAT community have a responsibility to challenge bullying if it occurs. All staff at each school are made aware of the procedures that they should follow if an incidence of bullying is brought to their attention. The first point of contact for parents should be the student's Form Tutor and then the Pastoral Lead for the year group. In each school there is a senior member of staff with ultimate responsibility for the Anti-bullying policy alongside the Headteacher. At Ridgeway Academy: Assistant Headteacher, Steve Booth; at Sandringham School: Assistant Headteacher, Stuart Kemp and at Verulam School: Deputy Headteacher, Anthony Flack.

4 PROCESS

4.1 Prevention is better than cure so at each AAT school we are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take seriously reports of bullying. We use the curriculum and other appropriate times to reinforce the ethos of the school and help students to develop strategies that combat bullying-

type behaviour. We strive to organise our community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, for example, teacher supervision during open access. We use a variety of methods to help students prevent bullying. As and when appropriate these may include:

- 4.1.1 protective behaviours course
- 4.1.2 school or class rules written by students
- 4.1.3 display materials around the school by a variety of means (posters, website etc)
- 4.1.4 behaviour contracts
- 4.1.5 circle time
- 4.1.6 writing stories and poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- 4.1.7 reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly/role play
- 4.1.8 discussions about bullying and why it matters
- 4.1.9 Annual Bullying survey
- 4.1.10 Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire
- 4.1.11 Kirkland Rowell student survey
- 4.1.12 Life Long Learning curriculum
- 4.1.13 Anti-bullying week

5.2 ACTIONS TO TACKLE BULLYING

- 5.2.1 All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all incidents. If bullying includes racist or homophobic abuse, it is reported to the lead senior teacher as detailed in point 6.
- 5.2.2 The following illustrates the steps that may be taken when dealing with incidents:
 - 5.2.2.1 If bullying/hurtful behaviour is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who was witness to it or the person to whom the bullying was reported
 - 5.2.2.2 An account of the incident is recorded and given to the relevant investigating staff member
 - 5.2.2.3 This staff member interviews all concerned and will record the incident
 - 5.2.2.4 Form tutors/class teachers are kept informed and if bullying persists, the tutor/teacher will advise other members of staff as appropriate
 - 5.2.2.5 Parents are kept informed
 - 5.2.2.6 Support systems and/or sanctions are used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- 5.3 The parents of both bullies and victims are informed about incidents and the action taken, or to be taken, by the school. Parents are asked to support the strategies which are proposed to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions imposed for repeated incidents will be clearly explained. If appropriate, the students will undergo a process of reconciliation. Bullying sanctions are referred to in the Behaviour Policy and Rewards and Consequences systems within all AAT schools. Persistent bullies may be excluded from school. A monitoring tool is normally used to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. Parents are reminded regularly through letters and newsletters to inform their children that they must tell someone if they being bullied.
- 5.4 If a parent is concerned about bullying they should contact the form tutor in the first instance and then the Pastoral Lead for the year group. If a parent wishes to take the matter further they should contact the Assistant Headteacher or the Headteacher.
- 5.5 If parents/carers remain unhappy, having followed the school's standard procedures, the school may refer them to the Hertfordshire school complaints team or to relevant outside agencies.

Further support for parents/carers can be found at Family Lives (www.familylives.org.uk) on 0808 800 2222.

- 5.6 Students are told they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult within the school, and that when another student tells them that they are being bullied, or if they see bullying taking place, it is their responsibility to report this to a member of staff. There is provision for school members to report incidents anonymously through the schools' e-mail addresses: Ridgeway: keepingsafe@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk; Sandringham: feelingsafe@sandringham.herts.sch.uk and Verulam: concern@verulam.herts.sch.uk: Students are encouraged to be "Standbys rather than Bystanders".

5.7 CYBERBULLING

Where any form of cyber bullying (as previously defined) affects another student in the school or may bring the reputation of the school into disrepute, the school reserves the right to be involved whether the electronic material was produced within the school or outside. Further the school will review electronic material held or accessed by any student in the school including their e-mail account and their mobile phone if we suspect cyber bullying is occurring. Students must be aware that some forms and levels of cyber bullying are illegal and the school will inform the police where necessary.

5.8 EXTERNAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Where necessary we will call on outside resources to aid an investigation, or offer support to a victim and/or the bully. Such agencies include the police, Behaviour Support Team, Youth Connexions, Links Outreach and counsellors. This will always be done in partnership with parents.

6 MONITORING AND REPORTING

All schools within the Alban Academies Trust review this policy annually and assesses its implementation and effectiveness. This policy is promoted and implemented throughout each school. AAT schools also analyse annual Bullying Surveys, Health Related Behaviour Questionnaires and use this data to inform future practice and policy.