

HAMMERSMITH ACADEMY

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying Policy

"Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community."
(DfE, 2007).

Hammersmith Academy is an academy in which young people flourish both academically and socially. We aim to foster a healthy and safe community where individuals take responsibility for themselves and show respect for others emphasising the importance of positive relationships amongst all members of the academy community.

1. Statement of Intent

Hammersmith Academy is committed to ensuring that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at Hammersmith Academy.

Hammersmith Academy expects all members of the school community to treat other people with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere, and to be protected when vulnerable, so that all may flourish without fear of unfair treatment or harassment.

We wish to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. Every member of the Academy community has the right to be safe and happy in the Academy, and to be protected when he/she is feeling vulnerable.

2. Definition

Bullying is any behaviour, which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is **repeated** and usually unprovoked and can continue for a prolonged period of time. It always reflects an imbalance and abuse of power. It is important that it must not be confused with the usual childhood/teenage squabbles and arguments where individuals "fall out" with one another.

While there is no single definition of bullying, the DfE identifies three points which most definitions share:

- The behaviour is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated
- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s of bullying and the target

'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)

'People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop.' (Safe to Learn, DfE)

The Academy works hard to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.
- Disability/SEN – because of, or focusing on a disability or special educational need.
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

Bullying can therefore constitute any of the above activities within the context of the definition provided. Bullying may occur to anyone and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of school staff, whether by students, parents or other staff. (Members of the school workforce suffering from or concerned about bullying may also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice).

Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

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

- ethnic background, religion or culture
- disability, special educational needs or a particular ability
- sexual orientation
- gender (including sexualised bullying)
- size, appearance or health conditions
- social or economic status (poverty, class)
- age/maturity
- 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.

Criminal Law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If Academy staff feel that an offence may have been committed they will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, 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.

3. Academy Objectives

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support.
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

4. Policy Aims

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

Staff and governors should follow the school policy when bullying is reported or suspected.

All students and parents should know what bullying is and inform a member of staff if bullying arises.

The Academy will always take bullying seriously. We use a range of proactive and reactive strategies to combat and prevent bullying.

5. Hammersmith Academy Student Leadership Statement

Everyone at Hammersmith Academy 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.

- We must not frighten others with threats or actions.
- We must not spread hurtful gossip about others.
- We must not be unkind and spiteful to others.
- We must treat people, and their property, with respect, at all times.
- We must do everything we can to stop bullying.

We encourage students to THINK

T = is it true?

H = is it helpful?

I = is it inspiring?

N = is it necessary?

K = is it kind?

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

- A teacher or the Academy nurse, or if you prefer
- To any friend or relative
- A Sixth Former
- Anyone in position to help (Your form tutor, student achievement manager, teacher)

If you witness bullying, don't ignore it. You will be doing the right thing for the bully, the victim and yourself. If you don't want to report it in person you can report it through the SHARP reporting system through the Hammersmith Academy website

6. Identifying Bullying

6.1 Possible signs and symptoms of bullying

Students who are being bullied show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or clinging to adults. They may show changes in their work patterns, may lack concentration or may even truant from school. Adults who are being bullied may withdraw from the team, have repeated time off sick and may suffer from anxiety and/or depression.

A student may display signs or behaviour of being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a student:

- is frightened of walking to or from Academy
- doesn't want to go to Academy on the Academy/public bus
- begs to be driven to Academy
- changes their usual routines
- is unwilling to go to Academy (Academy phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in Academy work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

6.2 Encouragement to tell

It is important that we create an atmosphere in the Academy where students or adults who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concerns.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the Academy community have a responsibility to challenge bullying if it occurs. All staff at the Academy 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 Tutor and then the Student Achievement manager. The Key Stage Assistant Headteachers have ultimate responsibility for the Anti-bullying policy alongside the Headteacher.

7.1 Guidelines

In the first instance, it is important to make it clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate and

to the bully that his/her behaviour is not acceptable, and has caused distress. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through restorative justice approaches - reconciliation, healing, counseling of both parties, and through the use of sanctions where necessary.

Parents/carers of both parties will be informed of what has happened, and how it has been dealt with. It is vital that everything that happens is carefully recorded in a clear factual way using CPOMS.

Any known bullying will always be investigated thoroughly at Hammersmith Academy and a written record of all reported incidents kept (including follow up actions) on CPOMS.

7.2 Advice for Students

- Remember that all students have a right not to be bullied
- Remember that no one deserves to be bullied. You do not have to feel ashamed if it happens to you.
- If students are bullied they should tell someone whom they trust as soon as possible.
- Ask parents/carers, family or teachers for advice and help.
- If a student sees someone else being bullied, they should not stand by watching as doing nothing can suggest support for the bully.
- If a student sees another student being bullied they should tell an adult AT ONCE.
- Students can anonymously write a note to the Head Teacher to report bullying incidents.

7.3 Advice to Parents/Carers

- Watch for early signs of distress in children such as:
- Reluctance to come to Academy
- Pattern of minor illnesses
- Damaged possessions/clothing
- Missing items of equipment
- Aggression to siblings/family members
- Mood swings/character changes

These symptoms may not always be an indication of bullying but some other difficulty. Parents and carers should consider the following steps if they are concerned:

1. Listen, take seriously and act upon all information you receive. Try to establish, who? What? When? Where?
2. If you your child is being bullied contact the Academy IMMEDIATELY. Your child may be worried that telling the Academy will make matters worse. Reassure your child that the Academy will not take hasty action but will listen to the concerns and agree with you and him what the appropriate steps should be.
3. With the appropriate member of staff, devise strategies that will help your child and provide support inside and outside of Academy.
4. Do not encourage your child to hit back. It will only make matters worse.
5. Encourage your child not to try to meet the bully's demands.

7.4 Advice to Teachers and Academy Staff

Be vigilant at all times - ensure that students are appropriately supervised at all times and that students who feel vulnerable know that they can always seek advice/support from an adult.

If you suspect bullying is happening, talk to the student(s) concerned. As soon as there is problem, either ask the student(s) to write down what has happened or do it yourself so that it can be passed on to the Student Achievement manager or Assistant Headteacher.

7.5 The role of the Curriculum in Anti-Bullying

Curriculum work across the Academy and especially in PSHE/SMSC and tutor time can enhance this policy by:

1. Dealing with the topic in a way, which explores why bullying occurs and gives alternative ways of behaving and dealing with difficulties.
2. By using teaching methods which encourage cooperative work and a variety of groupings so that students extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends.
3. By demonstrating how diversity and difference enriches our community.

Much effective anti-bullying work can be done through the informal curriculum – e.g. in discussions with students during unstructured times, through assemblies etc. Regularly changed displays can provide a focal point for anti bullying work.

The Academy will focus on Anti Bullying during Anti Bullying Week (November each year)

8. Actions to prevent bullying

Prevention is better than cure so at Hammersmith Academy 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 Academy 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:

- Hammersmith Academy anti-bullying ambassadors
- Anti-bullying Twitter campaigns
- Assemblies
- Anti-Bullying week
- Internet Awareness week
- Display materials around the Academy by a variety of means (posters, website etc)
- Behaviour plans for individuals
- Positive achievement assemblies
- Behaviour Plan
- Circle Time
- Tutor time, including PSHE and SMSC curricula
- Student surveys

9. Investigations and safeguarding children and young people

All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all incidents using CPOMS. If bullying includes racist or homophobic abuse, it is reported to the Assistant Headteacher for the appropriate key stage.

The following illustrates the steps that may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- 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

- An account of the incident is recorded on CPOMS and the relevant investigating staff member alerted
- This staff member interviews all concerned and will record the incident
- Form tutors/class teachers are kept informed and if bullying persists, the tutor/teacher will advise other members of staff as appropriate
- Parents are kept informed
- Support systems and/or sanctions are used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- The parents of both bullies and victims are informed about incidents and the action taken, or to be taken, by the Academy. 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
- Persistent bullies may be excluded from Academy. 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.

The sanctions that may be taken include:

- Official warning to cease offending
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or certain activities
- Reflection
- Use of the focus room
- Referral to senior staff and/or external agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Police Liaison Officer.
- Internal fixed term exclusion
- External fixed term or permanent exclusion.

If a parent is concerned about bullying they should contact the form tutor in the first instance and then the Student Achievement manager. If a parent wishes to take the matter further they should contact the Assistant Headteacher for their child's key stage or the Headteacher.

Students are told they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult within the Academy, 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 Academy members to report incidents anonymously through the Academy SHARP system. Students are encouraged to be "Standbys rather than Bystanders".

10. Cyberbullying

Where any form of cyber bullying (as previously defined) affects another student in the Academy or may bring the reputation of the Academy into disrepute, the Academy reserves the right to be involved whether the electronic material was produced within the Academy or outside. Further the Academy will review electronic material held or accessed by any student in the Academy 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 Academy will inform the police where necessary.

11. 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, Early Intervention Team, Family Support and counsellors. This will always be done in partnership with parents.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

Hammersmith Academy reviews this policy annually and assesses its implementation and effectiveness. This policy is promoted and implemented throughout the Academy. The Academy also analyses student questionnaires and uses this data to inform future practice and policies.

The Academy will ensure that students are aware of this policy through display work, SMSC and tutor time. Parents/carers can access this policy via the website or request a copy.

Date of next review: January 2022

Associated Policies: Behaviour Policy; Exclusion Policy.