Anti-Bullying Policy

Budmouth Academy, Weymouth

Version control	
July 2026	Pastoral Education Intervention for perpetrators delivered by PSHE teachers / Pastoral Team Opportunity for victims to be assigned an anti-bullying ambassador for ongoing peer support

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1. Aims

At Budmouth Academy we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a safe, secure and supportive atmosphere, free from oppression and abuse.

All types of bullying are unacceptable at our academy and will not be tolerated. All students and staff will be vigilant in identifying bullying incidents. All students should feel that when bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken to work with victims, bullies and any others involved. Any disciplinary action considered appropriate must be fair, consistent and proportional.

The aim of our strategy is to:

- Define what we mean by bullying in our academy and make everyone aware of that definition
- Make people aware that bullying is not tolerated in our academy
- Make sure that students know how to seek help if they are being bullied
- Explain how we deal with bullying
- Support the perpetrator and offer restorative work for them so they can begin to understand and make positive changes to their behaviour

2. Legislation

Budmouth Academy has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its students and to provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which they can learn and thrive. The Academy's safeguarding responsibilities are underpinned by the Education Act 2002, including Section 175, and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which require appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and to prevent bullying, so far as reasonably practicable, through the development and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. The Academy will also have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 when carrying out its duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Academy's behaviour and anti-bullying arrangements will also have regard to relevant Department for Education guidance on behaviour and preventing bullying.

3. Definition of bullying

Bullying is considered to be 'the repetitive, 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' (Anti-Bullying Alliance). One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'.

3.1 There are many variations on the precise definition of bullying, but there are four key characteristics of bullying:

- Repetitive and persistent over time
- Intentionally harmful
- Involving an imbalance of power
- Causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence

3.2 Bullying can include:

- Name-calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments
- Kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings
- Inappropriate text messaging and emailing, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
- Producing offensive graffiti
- Gossiping
- Excluding people from groups
- Spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others

3.3 Sustained bullying can be:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, pushing, punching, or any use of violence, unwanted physical contact, taking or breaking someone's things
- Verbal - name calling, racist/sexist/homophobic remarks, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threatening to cause harm
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Sexual harassment - sexually abusive comments, unwanted physical contact, comments about appearance
- Online - all areas of internet misuse, such as unpleasant and/or threatening emails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, internet chat rooms and instant messaging, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

3.4 Bullying can negatively impact its victims' attendance and attainment at the academy, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. The lives of students who are bullied are impacted in different ways; they may suffer injury, they may attend erratically, they may lose self-confidence, and they are likely to underachieve educationally and socially.

At national level, bullying has been a factor in student suicide. It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as the victim.

There is a difference between bullying and relational conflict. Conflict is a disagreement or a difference of opinion or interests between equals. The people involved in a conflict may disagree strongly and emotions may run high. When conflict is badly managed, it may result in aggression. In a conflict, both parties have power to influence the situation. Students exchanging unpleasant comments via social media is an example of such conflict, and may not represent an instance of bullying. Conflict may be an inevitable part of group dynamics, but bullying is not. Both relational conflict and bullying require intervention, however they will often take different forms. When trying to determine whether an issue should be regarded as bullying the STOP acronym can be helpful; this stands for 'Several Times On Purpose'.

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act gives the Principal the right to regulate students' conduct when they are not on academy premises. This can relate to bullying

incidents occurring on academy or public transport, outside local shops or in any other public place when students are in academy uniform. Bullying can also take place beyond the academy.

4. Signs of bullying

There are many warning signs that may indicate that someone is affected by bullying, either being bullied or bullying others. Recognising the warning signs is an important first step in taking action against bullying. Not all children who are bullied or are bullying others ask for help.

4.1 Students who are being bullied may show some of the following:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in work or not wanting to come into the academy
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves or talking about suicide

4.2 Students who are bullying others may:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Do not accept responsibility for their actions

5. Bullying online

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, apps or online via social media platforms, forums or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false or distasteful content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour. If such reports are made, academy staff may inform the police or local authority.

5.2 The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Discord and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

5.3 Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone involved – not just the person being bullied, but those doing the bullying or participating in it. Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

- Persistent - Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for students experiencing cyberbullying to find relief
- Permanent - Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life
- Hard to Notice - Teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognise if not reported

6. How to prevent bullying

All academy staff and parents have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can:

- Help students understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell students bullying is unacceptable and make sure students know how to get help.
- Students can be referred for pastoral intervention by PSHE teachers and pastoral staff as a preventative measure to educate on specific situations such as misogyny, racism or homophobia.
- Keep the lines of communication open. It is important to regularly check in with students, listen to them, know their friends and understand their concerns
- Encourage students to do what they love. Taking part in enrichment activities, interests and hobbies can boost confidence, help make friends and protect them from bullying behaviour
- Model how to treat others with kindness and respect. All academy staff and parents should treat others with kindness and respect, adults show the students in their lives that there is no place for bullying.

Should you wish to contact the academy in conjunction with any bullying issue/incident, please do so by emailing your child's tutor in the first instance.

7. How the academy will respond to bullying

7.1 When academy staff respond quickly and consistently to bullying behaviour they send the message that it is not acceptable. The following will occur:

- Victim, witness or third party reports an incident. Reports may be made in person, by phone, via Whisper, staff communication, an email to your child's tutor or added to MyConcern by staff.
- Alleged perpetrator(s), witnesses and victims are interviewed separately and a written record taken. Care will be taken not to expose the identity of anyone who wishes to remain anonymous.
- Collation and review of any additional evidence such as online communication, CCTV, or texts.
- The incident will be investigated to ascertain if it constitutes bullying or relation conflict.

- Relation conflict or isolated incidents will be dealt with by the relevant tutor or member of the Pastoral Team, issuing appropriate sanctions in accordance with the academy behaviour policy and ensuring the victims receive support as necessary.
- Incidents deemed to be bullying will be entered into the academy's electronic bullying & harassment log. Actions will be taken to prevent any further incidents taking place. These actions may include, but not limited to:
    - Education from the pastoral team
    - Teaching or tutor group changes
    - Restorative conversations
    - Obtaining an apology
    - Behaviour contracts
    - Informing parents of both victim and perpetrator
    - Issuing of sanctions
- If the victim wishes, they can be assigned to an antibullying ambassador to have further peer support and somebody to speak with to ensure the victim feels safe and comfortable at the academy.
- Incidents will be reviewed after 3 weeks to ensure that victims have not been subject to further incidents.

7.2 Sanctions are key in making the seriousness of bullying known to the perpetrator, as well as the victim and other students. Possible sanctions may include, but not limited to, after school detention, Academy Based Exclusion and suspension, as well as other strategies to prevent recurrence such as a behaviour contract and education/reflection for the perpetrator. If bullying persists, sanctions will be escalated and the academy may seek to involve external agencies, such as the Safer Schools Team or Education Psychologists.

It is important that the victim is given support to develop strategies to cope with the impact of bullying and to build resilience. Possible avenues of support and intervention include:

- Referral to the academy counsellor
- Engaging in conversations with pastoral support lead or Anti-bullying Ambassador
- Restorative conversations with the perpetrator
- Access to Student Support Centre
- Individual mentoring
- Pastoral Education Intervention

The academy will keep a written/electronic record of the incident, investigation and outcomes.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the academy must be alert to the signs of bullying and should act promptly and firmly against it. The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise. Tackling bullying is everyone’s responsibility, including all academy staff, students and parents.

8.1 The Principal

The Principal will ensure;

- The anti-bullying strategy is implemented in the academy. Both teaching and support staff are aware of the anti-bullying strategy and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying
- All staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying
- All incidents of bullying and the parties involved will be recorded and retained on a student file
- Report the number of specific types of bullying that take place in the academy
- All students know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in the academy

8.2 All Staff

Staff will;

- Actively promote anti-bullying strategies
- Take a proactive approach to preventing discriminatory or derogatory language and physical alterations.
- Report any bullying
- Respond appropriately and record the incident
- Record any bullying linked to safeguarding concerns using the 'MyConcern' portal
- Investigate any bullying, ensuring parents and carers are informed and issues are resolved in a robust, effective and timely manner. Appropriate action will be taken in each case and this will vary from incident to incident
- Action may include, but is not limited to, restorative justice meetings, detentions, inclusion, exclusion or police involvement where necessary
- Educate students on both the advantages and risks involved with social media

8.3 Pastoral staff/anti bullying team (Pastoral Team)

- Will take statements from those involved including witnesses using appropriate discretion not to further jeopardise the position of alleged victim or identify who has reported the incident.
- Take appropriate action such as holding restorative conversations and issuing sanctions as necessary.
- Inform parents of all parties about findings and next steps.
- Carry out review after 3 weeks to ensure no further incidents

8.4 SLT & Anti-Bullying Lead

The SLT & Anti-Bullying Lead will quality assure our academy practice and:

- Review the bullying and harassment log every 3 weeks to ensure appropriate steps are complete and follow up check ins are timely.
- Share ongoing or persistent incidents with wider SLT during SLT briefings.

8.5 Students

All students deserve the opportunity to be supported in order to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Students are educated through Personal Development, PSHE lessons, Tutor Curriculum, assemblies, and curriculum subjects to raise awareness, also with staff ethos to address good practice, discussions of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice.

Students should:

- Speak to a trusted adult such as their Tutor, Teacher, Teaching Assistant, Pastoral Support Leader, Behaviour & Ethos Coordinator or Head of School if they are experiencing or witnessing bullying
- Speak to a Student Leader / Anti-Bullying Ambassador
- Support anyone being bullied by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong
- Encourage anyone to share how they are feeling with a member of staff, if necessary accompany them when speaking with an adult

8.6 Parents/carers

If parents and carers suspect their child is being bullied they should

- Contact the child's tutor in the first instance
- Parents and carers must leave the initial investigation to the academy. Any attempt to resolve the issue themselves may make the matter worse
- Parents and carers must understand that the academy may have access to information that they do not have
- The academy will take all reasonable steps to investigate the allegations of bullying thoroughly. The academy does not have the powers of the Police, and does not operate in the same way. Conclusions are reached on the balance of probabilities
- Parents and carers should encourage their child to talk to their tutor or other members of staff
- The academy expects parents and carers to monitor their child's access to social media and ensure that such access is age-appropriate
- Parents and carers may also report concerns to the Police and restrict or cease their child's access to social media
- In line with its behaviour policy, the academy expects the full support of parents and carers in managing their child's behaviour, including online.

9. Support for Parents/Carers

Parents and Carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child who may be at risk of being bullied or is being bullied. Like siblings, they can help identify and monitor incidents of bullying behaviour, but can also be called upon to reinforce or reassert anti-bullying strategies with their child at home.

Anti-bullying alliance - www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk engages young people, parents/carers and teachers to change the attitudes, behaviour and culture of bullying by building skills and confidence to address different situations, both online and offline.

Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk is a charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection by 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 academy staff and assertiveness training for young people.

10. Quality assurance

The anti-bullying strategy will be reviewed annually. This review will include its effectiveness by examining the academy's anti-bullying tracking documents, where incidents of bullying are recorded and by discussing information for patterns of involvement of students, places or groups. They look out in particular for racist bullying, sexual harassment or bullying directed at children with disabilities or special educational needs, linking to the Equality Act 2010.