



Ambition Education Trust

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Group	A	Education and Students
Title	A2	Anti-Bullying Policy
Trust sub-committee	Standards and Curriculum Committee	
Last reviewed	July 2024	
Next scheduled review	March 2026	
Co-ordinated by	AET Safeguarding Lead Jennie Clarke	



1. Principles

Ambition Education Trust (AET) is committed to providing a safe, positive, caring and inclusive environment for its children, young people, staff and parents/carers; only if this is the case will all members of the community be able to achieve their potential. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent and stop bullying and this policy contains guidelines for doing so. At the AET we take bullying seriously; everyone in the AET community has the right to be protected from bullying and abusive behaviour. Our key aim is to prevent bullying by reinforcing a positive ethos and being proactive in our response.

- 1.1. The safety and welfare of the children and young people concerned will at all times be central to decisions about actions taken in response to bullying.
- 1.2. Anti-bullying approaches are consistent with the values of the AET and in preparing children and young people for life in an inclusive society.
- 1.3. In dealing with incidents, all parties will be supported and enabled to move on positively.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. Bullying and deliberately hurtful behaviour is unacceptable; we will challenge such behaviour
- 1.6. Bullying is a shared problem and all members of the AET community must work in partnership to resolve incidents.

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 Ambition Education Trust. If there are appendices they contain specific school level documents and detail of any differing procedures if applicable and relevant to this policy.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. "Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (e.g. cyber-bullying via text messages social media or gaming which can include images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences." Preventing and Tackling Bullying, DfE, 2017)
- 3.2. While there is no single definition of bullying behaviour it can be defined as:
 - 3.2.1. Behaviour that is intended to cause distress
 - 3.2.2. Behaviour that is repeated
 - 3.2.3. Where there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s of bullying and the target
- 3.3. Bullying can include:
 - 3.3.1. name-calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments
 - 3.3.2. offensive graffiti
 - 3.3.3. excluding people from groups
 - 3.3.4. gossiping and spreading hurtful or untrue rumours
 - 3.3.5. kicking, hitting, pushing
 - 3.3.6. taking belongings
 - 3.3.7. 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.
- 3.4. Children and young people may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:
 - 3.4.1. ethnic background, religion or culture
 - 3.4.2. disability, special educational needs or a particular ability

- 3.4.3. sexual orientation
- 3.4.4. gender (including sexualised bullying)
- 3.4.5. size, appearance or health conditions
- 3.4.6. social or economic status (poverty, class)
- 3.4.7. age/maturity
- 3.4.8. home circumstances – certain groups such as children and young people 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.

3.5. A child, young person or member of staff may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Everyone in the school community should be aware of these possible signs and that they should raise a concern with the appropriate staff member:

- 3.5.1. Unwillingness to come to the school/work
- 3.5.2. Withdrawn or isolated behaviour, change in personality traits
- 3.5.3. Complaining about missing or damaged possessions
- 3.5.4. Refusal to talk about the problem
- 3.5.5. Easily distressed, anxious, lacking in confidence
- 3.5.6. Damaged or incomplete work, decline in academic progress or performance
- 3.5.7. Physical appearance and/or injury

Note, however, that none of the above lists are exhaustive.

3.6. All bullying behaviour is taken seriously, including subtle actions which can build up for individuals over time, eroding self-esteem and building unhappiness or a climate of fear.

3.7. **Labelling**

- 3.7.1. The AET will not label children as either victims or bullies. It is important that children who have been the targets of bullying/hurtful behaviours are able to see that this experience will end and that it is not the result of something about themselves that has attracted or deserved such treatment by others.
- 3.7.2. Similarly, children who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be supported to resolve the matter and change their behaviour in order to move forward positively.
- 3.7.3. It is possible for any child to display bullying or hurtful behaviour from time to time. As schools within the AET we all reinforce the message that it is always the behaviours which are unacceptable and not the child.

3.8. **Hurtful Behaviour**

- 3.8.1. Not all hurtful behaviour is bullying, but all hurtful behaviour is unacceptable. The following are examples of hurtful behaviour which may not be bullying:
 - 3.8.1.1. Children or and young people may fall out with their friends and engage in hurtful behaviour. Such experiences can be extremely distressing to the individuals involved.
 - 3.8.1.2. Children and young people may retaliate against the hurtful behaviour of others. Although not all hurtful behaviour is intentional, all hurtful behaviours are a matter of concern and will be taken seriously. Where children or young people cause harm or distress unintentionally to others the impact of their behaviour will be pointed out to them and any continuance will be regarded as intentional.

3.9. **Cyber-bullying**

- 3.8.2. Where any form of cyberbullying affects another child in a school within the AET 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 child or young person in the school including their email account and their mobile phone if we suspect cyber bullying is occurring. Children and young people must be aware that some forms and levels of cyberbullying are illegal and the school will inform the police where necessary.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. All members of the AET have a responsibility to challenge bullying if it occurs. All adults in the school community (staff, governors and parents/carers) are expected to present positive role models to children. All staff at each school are made aware of the procedures, as outlined in their school's behaviour policy, that they should follow.

4.2. The Role of All Staff

- 4.2.1. All staff across the AET take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- 4.2.2. All staff employed by the AET will, where relevant, talk with children and young people in their care about bullying and what they should do as an individual if they are bullied, or are witness to or are aware of any bullying;
- 4.2.3. All staff employed by the AET will, where relevant, help the children distinguish between one off instances of hurtful or unkind behaviour and bullying
- 4.2.4. All staff employed by the AET will, where relevant, use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They will use various media, within the formal curriculum, including in our RSE, PSHE and Personal Development curricula to help children and young people empathise with the feelings of bullied children, and to develop the self-awareness and self-regulation required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour.
- 4.2.5. All staff employed by the AET will keep records of incidents that happen that they are aware of in an AET school.
- 4.2.6. Whole school assemblies raise awareness and promote anti bullying;
- 4.2.7. If an incident of bullying occurs, it will be fully investigated and all those involved will be spoken to as appropriate by the teacher, senior teacher or Headteacher and sanctioned in line with each school's Behaviour Policy or staff disciplinary procedure.
- 4.2.8. The child affected will be offered support, guidance and comfort;
- 4.2.9. Facts will be established as clearly as possible and those involved made aware of the seriousness of their behaviour. Children will be told the consequences of their actions (in line with each school's Behaviour Policy). Parents/carers will be informed;
- 4.2.10. All incidents are logged and Governors and Trustees will scrutinise reports detailing the numbers and types of bullying incidents regularly

4.3. How staff across all AET schools deal with bullying

- 4.3.1. Bullying is taken seriously and, in each school, in response to bullying, AET staff will follow their own policies, as for all inappropriate behaviour.
- 4.3.2. All staff in AET schools will support the child who is being bullied to help them feel safe and find responses to these behaviours that work.
- 4.3.3. All staff in AET schools will work with the child who is the perpetrator, in order to reflect on and change their behaviour. It is our aim to repair damaged or broken relationships where possible.
- 4.3.4. All staff in AET schools will work in partnership with the parents/carers of all children and young people involved.
- 4.3.5. Where necessary, all staff in AET schools will seek to involve the support of other professionals in supporting these children.

4.4. **The role of children and young people within the AET**

- 4.4.1. Children and young people are encouraged to:
 - 4.4.1.1. tell a trusted adult if they feel they don't feel safe in school and if the situation hasn't been resolved, they should keep on letting people know.
 - 4.4.1.2. follow each school's rules
- 4.4.2. As part of the AET community children and young people have a responsibility to help combat bullying by following these DOs, in a language that is appropriate to the age of the child

DO

- DO** be assertive and say 'NO' to bullying
- DO** tell someone if you think you are being bullied
- DO** be observant for signs that another child is unhappy
- DO** tell a member of staff if you think someone is being bullied
- DO** support other children when they are vulnerable.

4.5. **The role of parents/carers**

- 4.5.1. Parents/carers have a unique role to play in guiding and supporting their child through their school years and have a responsibility to support this anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of their school.
- 4.5.2. Parents/carers should:
 - 4.5.2.1. Model positive relationships – being kind and respectful to others;
 - 4.5.2.2. Work with their child and discuss together how to handle difficult situations;
 - 4.5.2.3. Establish physical boundaries; helping their child to understand that their body belongs to them and that everyone has their own physical boundaries.
 - 4.5.2.4. Make sure your child knows where to go for help;
 - 4.5.2.5. Contact the school immediately if they are concerned that their child is being intentionally hurt or targeted in school or suspect that their child may be the perpetrator;
 - 4.5.2.6. Monitor their child's access to and use of the internet and mobile technology;
 - 4.5.2.7. Support the strategies which are proposed to tackle the problem.
- 4.5.3. Parents/carers are expected to exercise reasonable confidentiality around incidents in which the child is involved and must not attempt to resolve matters informally.
- 4.5.4. If parents/carers have information about an instance of bullying, or are concerned their child is being bullied these concerns should be raised with the member of staff who is best placed to deal with the issue, starting with the individual Form Tutor/Class Teacher, for example, followed by the Head of Year/member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 4.5.5. If parents/carers are dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident this should be raised with the Headteacher via the school office.
- 4.5.6. If parents/carers remain unhappy, having followed these standard procedures, the next step is to make a formal complaint following the AET Complaints Policy.

5. **Anti Bullying Procedures**

- 5.1. Each school has its own internal procedures for reporting and investigating concerns relating to bullying. These procedures will be set out in each school's policies.
- 5.2. All incidents of bullying will be recorded on CPOMS.
- 5.3. 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 children and young people's wellbeing beyond the school day. Staff, parents and carers, and children and young people must be vigilant to bullying outside of school and report and respond accordingly in line with this policy and their school policies.
- 5.4. There may be occasions where, despite all efforts, problems continue. It is particularly difficult to deal with bullying or harassment that takes place outside a school and, in these cases, the school will advise parents to make contact with the Police if they feel that this is appropriate or other supportive agencies.
- 5.5. There may be occasions where, despite all efforts, problems continue. It is particularly difficult to deal with bullying or harassment that takes place outside a school and, in these cases, the school will advise parents to make contact with the Police if they feel that this is appropriate or other supportive agencies.
- 5.6. **Child on Child Abuse and Safeguarding**
 - 5.6.1. Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as child-on-child abuse. In most instances, the conduct of children and young people towards each other will be covered by the School Behaviour Policy. However, some allegations might be of such a serious nature that they become safeguarding concerns.
 - 5.6.2. Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the children and young people who are experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

6. Prevention

- 6.1. Ambition Education Trust is committed to promoting positive values of mutual respect and concern and to taking action to prevent bullying in a wide range of contexts. Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential in keeping incidents in our schools to a minimum.
- 6.2. All AET schools have a School Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct which set clear expectations about acceptable behaviour and how members of the school community should treat one another.
- 6.3. The whole school community will:
 - 6.3.1. create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
 - 6.3.2. recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children and young people (child on child abuse).
 - 6.3.3. recognise the potential for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
 - 6.3.4. recognise that bullying may be affected and influenced by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved.
 - 6.3.5. openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with

caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.

- 6.3.6. challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- 6.3.7. be encouraged to use technology positively and responsibly.
- 6.3.8. work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- 6.3.9. actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.

6.4. **Staff Training**

The Trust ensures that all members of staff receive appropriate training on preventing and tackling bullying behaviour, especially awareness of the risk and indications of bullying and child abuse, and how to deal with cases.

6.5. **Anti-Bullying Education**

The school ensures that a variety of measures are taken throughout the year to educate children and young people about bullying and this policy. children and young people are taught that bullying will not be tolerated at the school and how to promote positive attitudes as well as how to share problems and raise concerns. Through assemblies, the curriculum and classwork, themed days, display of posters around the school, etc. children and young people are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying.

7. **Monitoring and Reporting**

- 7.1. Schools within the AET analyse half termly CPOMS data alongside annual surveys which ask children and young people about their experiences of bullying and use this data to:
 - 7.1.1. ensure all AET schools are safe and positive places for the whole school community;
 - 7.1.2. ensure that all members of the AET community are protected from bullying behaviour;
 - 7.1.3. increase awareness of bullying, its cause and its negative impact, ensuring that all trustees, governors, staff, children, young people and parents/carers have an understanding of what bullying is;
 - 7.1.4. ensure there are consistent, constructive and fair responses to bullying incidents;
 - 7.1.5. ensure procedures for dealing with bullying are clear, and that all members of the AET community know what the AET policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises

8. **Evaluation and Review**

All schools within the Ambition Education Trust review this policy biennially and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy is promoted and implemented throughout each school, in each school it is underpinned by the school's behaviour policy. Schools' analysis of at least annual surveys which ask children and young people about their experiences of bullying also inform future practice and policy.

