

Kisimul

EDAC08 | Acacia School

Anti-Bullying

Policy and Procedure

Document Information

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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

No person or group should suffer oppression or lack of opportunity because of a protected characteristic. Kisimul Group opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination, and we are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion in the application of our policies so that everyone has equal access and feels welcome and at ease. To achieve this aim, the application and accessibility of our policies, and the decisions and outcomes arising from our policies, may be monitored to ensure their use is fair, equal and consistent irrespective of any characteristic as may be defined by the *Equality Act 2010*. This is to ensure that we are listening to people and appropriately understanding their needs, and are tailoring the way we interact and publish or act on our policies to ensure we are promoting equal access and opportunity at all times.

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1. Introduction

This document outlines Acacia School's commitment to, and procedures for, tackling any incidents of bullying and reducing the chances of further concerns and impact in the school. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. Since many of our learners have severe learning disabilities and are autistic, it is imperative that staff are vigilant, as many of our children/young people cannot communicate effectively and are therefore potentially vulnerable to harm. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, Acacia School aims to create a safe, disciplined environment where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners, and to all members of Acacia School staff.

3. Definitions

3.1 Advocacy

Per **Q30 Advocacy Policy and Procedure**: "Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy providers work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice".

3.2 Behaviours of Concern

Per (*Emerson et al, 2011*): "Culturally abnormal behaviours of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit the use of or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities".

3.3 Bullying

Per *Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017)*: "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 (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on 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".

3.4 Perpetrator/alleged perpetrator

Someone who has (or is alleged to have) carried out or caused actions which are harmful to others.

3.5 Victim

Someone who has suffered any kind of harm as a result of someone else's action or inaction.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Chief Executive Officer

Has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with national and local standards that are reflected in the organisation's policies.

4.2 The Group Executive Education Lead

Is responsible for implementing this policy at Acacia School and across the group education provision, keeping it updated in line with current legislation and guidance, and for facilitating any anti-bullying training which may be required, as outlined in [Section 9](#).

4.3 Education Governance and Safeguarding Committee

Is responsible for providing strategic leadership and enhancing co-ordination between Acacia School and other establishments in the Kisimul Group to promote good, safe working practices for individuals supported and educated by Kisimul. This includes, but is not limited to, reviews of bullying and peer-on-peer incidents.

4.4 The Headteacher

Is responsible for supporting Acacia School staff to access and understand this policy and its implications for their work, and to request any training which may be required on their behalf.

4.5 All school staff

Are responsible for:

4.5.1 Attending all mandatory training as required and informing the **headteacher** if they need further training to perform any task requested of them.

4.5.2 Acting in the interests and safeguarding the wellbeing of every learner at all times.

4.5.3 Maintain comprehensive records associated with any behaviours of concern, and recording any concerns in relation to the behaviour or presentation of a young

person so that this may be picked up by colleagues and any changes noted and acted upon appropriately by the relevant clinical team.

5. Policy Statement

5.1.1 In our school, we must be mindful that certain behaviour patterns exhibited by young people will cause distress and anxiety to other young people (such as loud vocalisations or frequent physical outbursts). While these may not be purposefully targeted at others, we should look to advocate for our young people and recognise potential symptoms within their presentation that suggest they are finding other young people's presentation challenging. We should also consider our learners' sensory and communication profiles to ensure best compatibility in peer groups, and thus reduce the risk of bullying incidents occurring.

5.1.2 All incidents of perceived and presentation related bullying will be dealt with as quickly as possible, and it will be communicated to the perpetrator in an accessible way that this behaviour is unacceptable and must not be repeated.

5.1.3 Positive and supportive relationships should be modelled and encouraged.

5.1.4 Children/young people should be taught to say no and how to ask for help.

5.1.5 Any victim of bullying should have the opportunity, and should be encouraged, to seek out a member of staff for advice.

5.1.6 With constant staff supervision, children/young people should only have a very limited opportunity to initiate bullying.

5.1.7 Bullying on the grounds of race, disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation also has implications under the *Equality Act 2010* and the *Public Sector Equality Duty 2011*.

5.1.8 If staff become aware of bullying or have any indication that it is taking place they must intervene immediately, following the steps in [Section 7](#).

6. Cyber-bullying

See also: **Online Safety** in *EDAC02 Acacia School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure*

6.1.1 The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for "virtual" bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

6.1.2 It is important that we educate and train our young people to use technology to support both their education, social and leisure activities and development. However, staff should be mindful of the potential for online abuse, and also ensure that our young people understand that posting harmful or abusive comments is unacceptable and constitutes bullying behaviour. No assumptions should be made that because of their

learning disabilities, our young people do not have the capacity to access technology, and indeed that makes them more vulnerable to potential harm and abuse. Therefore, clear vigilance and oversight of what content and forums they are accessing should be in place, with concerns reported and shared promptly.

7. Intervention Procedure

7.1 Immediate steps

7.1.1 If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed.

7.1.2 The first priority would always be to ensure the immediate welfare and safety of the young people affected.

7.1.3 Information about the incident is to be recorded on Radar (online incident reporting tool), and the incident must be discussed at handing over times and within team meetings.

7.1.4 A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Headteacher, who will maintain a record of how the incident is dealt with and resolved.

7.1.5 Parents and relevant frontline staff will be kept informed, and all staff will be requested to continually observe interactions between the young people. Risk assessments may need to be updated to reflect any patterns of behaviour that could cause anxiety to particular young people, whether this is purposeful or otherwise.

7.1.6 Helping perpetrators of bullying to understand the consequences of their actions, and the application of any sanctions, will follow ***EDAC06 Acacia School Suspension and Exclusion Policy***.

7.2 Supporting victims

7.2.1 Offer reassurance, help and support to the victim, and show them that asking for help was the right thing to do.

7.2.2 Assure the victim that prompt action will be taken to stop the bullying, and that if any reoccurrence of bullying takes place in the meantime, they will be supported by staff.

7.2.3 The school should have clear and visual displays that identify procedures for learners who feel anxious or worried about issues, and who they can speak to. In most instances it is the familiarity and vigilance of staff who are working with the young person who will notice differences in presentation and engagement which could be the symptoms of bullying or discomfort with the actions of other young people.

7.3 Supporting (alleged) perpetrators

7.3.1 Explaining that he/she has been accused of bullying, and ensuring appropriate boundaries are maintained to prevent re-occurrence.

7.3.2 Encouraging the perpetrator to understand the victim's point of view.

7.3.3 Explain that this is unacceptable behaviour and makes other children/young people unhappy. Augmentative communication and clinical support may be required to promote active understanding.

7.3.4 It may be necessary to separate or move young people, and this should be done supportively and with consideration to the impact this may have on a young person and their education, and sensitivity to changes of routine.

7.3.5 Young people will be supported to understand the consequences of their actions in line with their ability to understand, using their preferred method of communication.

7.3.6 If it is recognised that young people who can at times impact on others' emotional and physical wellbeing lack the cognitive understanding of that impact, then their behaviour would not appropriately be identified as bullying. This does not, however, detract from how it makes someone else feel and therefore will be responded to in line with this policy.

7.3.7 It is important that staff recognise behaviours that are intimidating to other young people and that they prevent harm from happening. The most effective way of preventing bullying is to be clear as to what is going wrong for the perpetrator (i.e. what is triggering the behaviour) as well as ensuring the safety and protection of the victim.

7.4 Involving other stakeholders

7.4.1 Other agencies may need to be involved by the school, such as:

- Parents.
- Children/young peoples' social worker or placing authority.
- External health professionals

7.4.2 In case of a serious incident of bullying that is deemed to be a child protection issue, the ***EDAC02 Acacia School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure*** will be implemented. The DSL should have awareness of peer on peer interactions that might indicate an imbalance in relationships that could cause welfare concerns for any young person.

8. Prevention

Kisimul Group believes that there will be reduced opportunities for bullying in school where there is a consistent encouragement of tolerance and consideration/respect for others. At Acacia School, this means:

8.1.1 Openly discussing differences between people that can motivate bullying in the school curriculum, such as ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexuality. See ***EDAC11 Acacia School Curriculum Policy***.

8.1.2 Making it easy for children/young people to report bullying.

8.1.3 Creating an inclusive and open environment. See ***EDAC10 Acacia School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure***.

8.1.4 Celebrating success and recognising achievement.

8.1.5 Provide effective staff training and highlight the bullying policies and practices in staff inductions.

8.1.6 Using lessons learned at to regularly evaluate and update the school's and the wider Kisimul Group's approach to bullying.

9. Training Requirements

Kisimul will provide opportunities to:

9.1.1 Train or provide information so all staff can identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the respective policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents).

9.1.2 Update staff on the latest research and publications around all forms of bullying and exploitation (including, for example – online, peer-on-peer, child sexual exploitation and county lines), within the context of contextual safeguarding.

9.1.3 Consider a range of approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, student council and area meetings.

10. Monitoring Compliance

All bullying incidents are reported and recorded on the Kisimul Group incident management platform Radar. Incidents are analysed by the SMT, Headteacher, the Group Executive Education Lead and the Safeguarding Committee to ensure that learning from incidents at Acacia School can take place and the risks of bullying for all of our learners can be reduced.

11. Linked Documents

11.1 Kisimul Policies

11.1.1 EDAC02 Acacia School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

11.1.2 EDAC06 Acacia School Suspension and Exclusion Policy and Procedure

11.1.3 EDAC10 Acacia School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

11.1.4 EDAC11 Acacia School Curriculum Policy

11.1.5 Q30 Kisimul Group Advocacy Policy and Procedure

11.2 Legislation

11.2.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

11.2.2 Education and Inspections Act 2006

11.2.3 Equality Act 2010

11.2.4 Protection from Harassment Act 1997

11.2.5 Malicious Communications Act 1988

11.3 Statutory and Best Practice Guidance

11.3.1 Preventing and tackling bullying (Department for Education, 2017)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

11.3.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, 2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

