

Anti-Bullying with Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy February 2022

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust

Rationale

It is every child's right to enjoy their school life feeling safe, secure and free from hurtful or harmful experiences. We aim to provide a caring and friendly environment for all our pupils, to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them to maximise their potential. The Link Academy strives to always promote positive behaviour and encourage good relationships throughout the Trust.

This policy, alongside other relevant policies, is designed to ensure that as a Trust we are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and fairly against it. If an incident arises, we deal with the situation robustly, swiftly and appropriately. We will not tolerate any form of bullying or peer-on-peer abuse within the Link Academy Trust, academies or by association.

Aim of the Policy

The aims in managing incidents of bullying are:

- to provide a secure environment in which pupils can report incidents confidently
- to show all pupils and parents that bullying is taken seriously
- to enable staff to respond calmly and consistently to any bullying or peer-on-peer incidents
- to reassure pupils that the school will protect and support all parties whilst the issues are resolved
- to provide long term and positive programmes of personal development to ensure all stakeholders understand behaviour expectations- to be kind and caring to everyone.

What is bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying but it is generally considered to be when an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults, and will probably continue if no action is taken.

It is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation- this list is not exhaustive

What bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

It is inevitable that conflicts will sometimes occur. In these conflicts, children may hurt each other's feelings. This behaviour is never desirable but it does happen. We use a restorative approach believing that it is appropriate to help children understand how they may have hurt each other, and to teach them different ways to behave, than it is to punish them. Occasionally, hurtful behaviour can become bullying. Bullying differs from teasing or falling out with friends or other types of aggressive behaviour when it is persistent and either:

- i. There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate, or
- ii. There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend them self. Friendship fall outs are seen as accidental or occasional, with no power imbalance or hierarchy.

We teach children the acronym 'STOP' (Several Times On Purpose) to help them differentiate between bullying and other situations as not all hurtful behaviour is bullying. We also use 'STOP' to encourage the children to 'Start Telling Other People'.

Forms of bullying/peer on peer abuse (see KCSiE 2021 for more information) can include:

- Verbal abuse e.g. name calling, hurtful remarks, taunting, threats
- Physical abusing e.g. kicking, hitting, biting, damaging property.
- Cyber bullying e.g. inappropriate messages, degrading photos, inappropriate comments
- Sexting e.g. sending explicit texts or images
- Initiation/hazing e.g. initiation ceremony to join a group
- Prejudice/hate e.g. range of hurtful behaviours, including physical and emotional referring to their ethnicity, culture and/or religion.
- Sexual violence/sexual harassment e.g. acting sexually towards someone that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- SEND e.g. bullying a target because of their additional need.
- LGBTQ+ e.g. comments, taunting or rumour.

Links to other policies & documents

- Behaviour policy
- Equality statement
- Equal opportunity policy
- Online safety policy
- RSE policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- SEND policy
- KCSiE (2021), Working together to safeguard children (2018), Equality act (2010)

Prevention of Bullying or Peer-on-peer abuse

We work in a proactive way to teach children the essential social and emotional skills they need to make happy and effective relationships. To fulfil our aim of providing a friendly and safe environment for all pupils, so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, the following strategies are used:

- Restorative approaches
- Anti-bullying committee
- Raising awareness of bullying/antibullying week
- Jigsaw programme for PSHE
- Regular e-safety updates and training
- Positive, active play is encouraged, play leaders
- Child-friendly anti-bullying leaflet
- Celebrating success
- School Rules and behaviour policy
- Open door policy
- Student Council/ gathering student voice

Support/ procedure of dealing with bullying

The school will regularly emphasise to pupils that bullying is not acceptable and that all incidents will be taken seriously.

Pupils will also be encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff or their parents. Parents should raise any concerns they have with the class teacher or Academy Head at the earliest opportunity.

All incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated and appropriate action taken. Incidents will be dealt with speedily, fairly and positively.

Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity where an incident is considered serious enough to warrant further investigation or where there are repeated incidents of a minor nature.

Parents will be made aware of the Trust complaints procedure. Any complaints made through that procedure will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly.

Advice and support will be offered to the victim of bullying.

The perpetrator will be supported in recognising their unsociable behaviour and offered support to modify that behaviour.

Staff will also ensure that, where necessary, action is taken to prevent further incidents. Such action may include:

- imposition of sanctions
- obtaining an apology
- informing parents of the situation
- provision of mentor support for both victim and the perpetrator
- following safeguarding procedures
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All staff, teaching and non-teaching will be vigilant and deal with all observed incidents of bullying even where the individual has not reported the incident.

All teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents will be made aware of the contents of this policy and will receive regular updates and reminders in line with its implementation.

Reporting

Staff should keep good chronologies of all incidents.

Where further investigation is considered necessary a report must be written and retained-dated and signed in full with a clear print of the name. This record will include detail of the incident(s), the investigation and outcome.

All BPH (bullying, prejudice, hate) incidents are also reported to Devon LEA & referred to the Academy Trust Safeguarding and SEND lead.

[BPHI Reporting \(pupils/parents\) - Equality and Diversity \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/education/safeguarding/bph-reporting)

A monthly log of any BPHI is kept by the Academy Head and returned termly to the ATSSL.

Evaluation and Review

All staff will be asked to ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and will be encouraged to provide feedback on its effectiveness on an ongoing basis. It will be available online and in the Staff Handbook.

This policy will be brought to the attention of all parents and will be freely available to any parent wishing to see a copy.

This Policy is reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee on a 2-yearly cycle.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 07 February 2022