

# Alt Bridge School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

<b><i>Reviewed by:</i></b>	Mrs K Parkinson	<b>Date:</b> 14.04.25
<b><i>Approved by:</i></b>	Full Governors	<b>Date:</b> 22.05.25

**To be reviewed March 2027**

# Alt Bridge School Anti-Bullying Policy

'Every child is unique – in characteristics, interests, abilities and needs; and every child has the ability to enjoy his or her rights without discrimination of any kind.'

(Thomas Hammarberg 1997)

## Background

Alt Bridge School is a specialist school for learners aged 11-19 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. All of our students have Education, Health and Care Plans. The majority of students who attend Alt Bridge experience social communication difficulties which affect their social relationships.

We place a strong emphasis on positive relationships throughout our whole school community. Our behaviour for learning approaches aim to equip students with the skills they need in order to develop positive relationships. This is key preparation for adulthood.

## Definition of Bullying

The Department for Education, defines bullying as follows;

'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.'

*Taken from Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice, DfE 2017*

The four main types of bullying behaviour:

1. **Physical bullying:** hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings.
2. **Verbal bullying:** name-calling, insulting, racist or discriminatory remarks attributed to gender or sexual orientation.
3. **Social bullying:** spreading malicious rumours or lying about someone, mimicking unkindly, negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks, playing unkind tricks or pranks to embarrass and humiliate, excluding others, being ignored, intimidation or threatening behaviour.
4. **Cyber bullying:** using IT particularly the internet and mobile phones, to bully others

## Aims and Expectations

At Alt Bridge School we are committed to working with children, staff, governors and parents/carers to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated. Our school is a place where every person has the right to be himself or herself, to be included and to learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. At our school the safety, welfare and well-being of all pupils and staff is a key priority. We take all incidences of bullying seriously and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and tackle any bullying, harassment or discrimination.

We actively promote values of respect and equality and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our pupils to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in 21st Century Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our pupils by society, when they enter the world of work or further study.

Alt Bridge School Anti-Bullying Policy outlines what Alt Bridge School will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy is developed with the involvement of the whole school community and will continue to be developed in this way.

### **Main aims:**

- ▶ For all members to feel safe and valued
- ▶ To involve parents and carers as early as possible
- ▶ To promote equality and inclusion across the school
- ▶ To provide a safe learning environment
- ▶ To ensure that all students know how to report incidents of bullying
- ▶ To prioritise and support welfare and mental health of students.
- ▶ To consistently tackle discrimination
- ▶ To educate all students about rights

## **Pastoral Arrangements**

Each student has the following allocated adults for pastoral support;

- A form teacher
- A form teaching assistant
- A head of year amongst the Senior Leadership Team
- A designated learning mentor

The above individuals play a very important role in preventing and responding to incidents of bullying.

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact their child's form teacher as soon as they become aware of or concerned by bullying so that immediate action can be taken to investigate and address the issue.

## **Preventing to bullying**

Our school ethos, curriculum and additional provision is carefully designed in order to support students in development positive relationships with others and good mental health and wellbeing. We work to prevent bullying through;

- The curriculum
- Creating an inclusive environment
- Tracking behaviour for learning through our Epraise system
- Supporting students to develop social communication skills

- Having pastoral support in place to address friendship issues early
- Raising awareness about bullying and the types of bullying amongst students
- Ensuring students know how to report bullying
- Providing wellbeing support for all students
- Working with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Activity promoting our core values of care, courtesy, resilience and determination.
- Celebrating diversity
- Training our staff to recognise different forms of bullying and knowing how to respond.
- Regularly update and evaluate our approaches to take into account the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Proactively gather and record concerns and intelligence about bullying incidents and issues so as to effectively develop strategies to prevent bullying from occurring.
- Actively create “safe spaces” for vulnerable children and young people.
- Work with staff, other agencies and the wider school community to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media positively and responsibly.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop students’ social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

### **Restorative approaches**

As our students mature into adults, they will need to be prepared to manage their social relationships and independently as possible both in their personal lives and in the workplace.

We work with our students to develop their skills in resolving conflicts through restorative approaches. Restorative practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all of the parties involved.

A report published by the Department for Education gave whole-school restorative approaches the highest rating of effectiveness at preventing bullying, with a survey of schools showing 97% rated restorative approaches as effective.

We retain the use of sanctions/consequences where appropriate and where restorative approaches have not been effective or have not been possible.

### **When bullying occurs**

When we become aware of bullying, the following steps will be taken by staff;

- The person reporting the bullying will be listened to and their concerns will be taken seriously
- Concerns will be recorded on our secure and confidential reporting system
- Concerns will be investigated as soon as possible
- Parents and carers will be informed about instances of bullying and how we are addressing it. Feedback following investigation will be provided.

- Steps will be taken to separate the student who has experienced bullying from the student who has instigated the bullying until an investigation has taken place and a resolution agreed.
- Restorative practices will be applied to repair relationships *when appropriate* and only when this is agreed to by both/all parties involved. In instances involving more serious incidents or with younger students, parental permission will be obtained prior to the use of restorative approaches.
- Measures will be taken to prevent a repeat or escalation of the bullying.
- In serious cases, a risk assessment will be completed in order to introduce specific and individual measures which will reduce the risk of further bullying.
- The behaviour for learning policy will be applied in responding to bullying.
- Additional provision may be put in place to support either the student who has experienced bullying, the student who instigated the bullying or both.

## Recognising bullying

We will;

- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Recognise the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Provide a range of approaches for students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Challenge practice (including 'banter') which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying in all forms throughout the curriculum and supported with a range of approaches such as through outside agencies, displays, assemblies, peer support and the school/student council.
- Train all staff including teaching staff, support staff (including administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff to identify all forms of bullying, follow the school policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents).
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the school's attention which involves or affects students even when they are not on school premises, for example when using school transport or online etc.
- Hold bi-weekly safeguarding meetings to identify incident of bullying.

We are aware that students who have been the victims of bullying themselves in the past can be at risk of replicating this behaviour and becoming perpetrators themselves. It is important that they access the right support to overcome past trauma.

SEND students may be vulnerable to bullying but they also could be involved in bullying of others. We will use all the above responses to bullying, to ensure our students develop more prosocial behaviours.

## **Involvement of students**

We will:

- Regularly gather children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure all students are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying. (from a verbal warning through to potential permanent exclusion and potential police involvement)
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in schools (Anti Bullying / Wellbeing /Kindness weeks).
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites.
- Offer support to students who have been bullied.
- Work with students who have been bullying in order to change their behaviour over time.
- Publish a student friendly guide to how bullying will be dealt with in school.
- Involve students in our equalities working party.
- Seek the views of students through surveys and school council arrangements
- Reward positive social behaviour through our Epraise behaviour for learning system.
- Apply consequences for unkindness towards others through our Epraise behaviour for learning system.

## **Involvement and Support from other agencies**

We regularly have involvement and support from other agencies through our Alt Bridge unique offer of provision in order to deliver programme such as:

- Show racism the red card
- Merseyside Youth Association focused groups
- Theatre Groups
- Police (Knife crime)
- The CELLS Project
- SHARE
- The Get Away Safe programme

## **School based preventative work**

We provide focused events and themed weeks to raise awareness throughout the school calendar year such as;

- Wellbeing and Kindness week
- Kindness Award
- Wellbeing Awards

We also have a school Equalities working party who work to educate the whole school community about equality and diversity, ensuring that we celebrate diversity regularly and through the curriculum as well as events, speakers and workshops.

## **Liaison with parents and carers**

We aim to involve parents and carers as soon as possible when concerns arise and to work with them to respond.

We will;

- Ensure that parents / carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- Ensure parents / carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.
- Work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Parent/ Carer meetings (Coffee mornings and event speakers).

## **Links with other school policies and practices**

This Policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Complaints policy
- The teaching of Citizenship and PSHE Education
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Online safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- E safety Policy

## **Monitoring & review, policy into practice**

This Policy will be reviewed bi-yearly as well as if incidents occur that suggest the need for review. The school uses the guidance by the DFE\* and the Anti-Bullying Alliance\*\* to inform its action planning to prevent and tackle bullying.

## **Responsibilities**

This Policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken to both prevent and respond to bullying.

It is the responsibility of:

- School Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- Governors, the Headteacher, Senior Managers, Teaching and Non Teaching staff to be aware of this policy and implement it accordingly.
- The Headteacher to communicate the policy to the school community and to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably,
- Students to abide by the policy.

\* DFE Guidance "*Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*"

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/>

\*Preventing and tackling bullying July 2017 DFE guidance

\*\**Anti Bullying Alliance guidance*

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>



## Useful Links and Supporting Organisations and Guidance

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- DfE: “Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies”, and “Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools” November 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tacklingbullying>
- DfE: ‘No Health without mental health’: <https://www.government/publications/no-healthwithout-mental-health-a-cross-government-outcomes-strategy>
- Family Lives: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>
- Kidscape: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- MindEd: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>
- PSHE Association: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/>
- Restorative Justice Council: <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/>
- The Diana Award: <https://diana-award.org.uk/>
- Victim Support: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Young Minds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- Young Carers: [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)
- Childnet International: <https://www.childnet.com/>
- Think U Know: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) [www.gov.uk/government/groups/ukcouncil-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/ukcouncil-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis)
- LGBT Hub: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/lgbt-hub>
- Stonewall: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>
- Changing Faces: <https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/>