



# **Aspirations Academies Trust**

in association with AUI and QISA

## **Cyber Bullying Policy - Primary**

<b>Date of last review:</b>	<b>May 2020</b>	<b>Review period:</b>	<b>2 years</b>
<b>Date of next review:</b>	<b>May 2022</b>	<b>Owner:</b>	<b>DFO</b>
<b>Type of policy:</b>	<b>Academy</b>	<b>LAB or Board approval:</b>	<b>Board</b>

## 1. Statement of Intent

The Aspirations Academies Trust understands that everyone in the school deserves to learn and to teach in a supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied or harassed.

In the Aspirations Academies Trust communication technology plays an increasingly large and important part in the school curriculum.

It is therefore important to acknowledge that sometimes, new technologies can be used for unpleasant or illegal purposes. In the Aspirations Academies Trust we recognise the existence of cyber bullying and the severity of the issue.

We are committed to;

- Educating Pupils, staff and parents about cyber bullying and its consequences
- Providing a productive and healthy learning environment.
- Providing a robust policy in order to prevent, and if necessary deal with any cyber bullying should it arise at school or within the school community.
- Developing and improving the policies and procedures around cyber bullying through regular evaluation and review.
- Providing a strong anti-bullying policy and acting upon it where bullying arises.

## 2. Context

Bullying is based on unequal power relations, real or perceived. It will usually be repeated and be difficult to defend against. It is intended to hurt the recipient emotionally and/or physically. It can manifest verbally, in writing or images, and can be done physically, financially (including damage to property) or through social isolation. Verbal bullying is the most common form especially within schools.

Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other communication technology. It can take many forms, but can go even further than face to face bullying by invading home and personal space and can target one or more people.

It can take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others.

It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.

Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways, including:

- a) Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages;
- b) Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras;
- c) Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible;
- d) Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name;
- e) Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chat-room;
- f) Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging;
- g) Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)
- h) In some cases, this type of bullying may constitute a criminal offence.

In the Aspirations Academies Trust, cyber bullying is considered as serious as any other form of bullying. Cyber bullying issues are dealt with in an appropriate manner dependent on the severity and frequency of the issue.

### **3. Responsibilities for the prevention of cyber bullying**

- 3.1. The Principal will be in overall charge of the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and will ensure that their effectiveness is monitored.
- 3.2. The Principal will ensure that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing cyber bullying.
- 3.3. All members of staff will be trained to identify signs of cyber bullying and will be helped to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use by self-study and regular updates.
- 3.4. An e-Safety Code of Conduct will be developed, in conjunction with parents, and periodically reviewed and communicated to help pupils protect themselves from being caught up in cyber bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- 3.5. Pupils will be advised on cyber bullying through curricular and pastoral activities.
- 3.6. Pupils and staff are required to comply with the school's Acceptable IT Use Policy.
- 3.7. Parents/Carers are required to sign the school's Acceptable IT Use Agreement.
- 3.8. Parents/Carers are encouraged to discuss cyber safety and bullying with their child to supplement learning.
- 3.9. Parents/Carers will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.

## **4. Required actions if cyber bullying occurs**

- 4.1. Advise the child not to respond to the message.
- 4.2. Refer to relevant policies including e-Safety, acceptable use, anti-bullying and PHSE and apply appropriate sanctions.
- 4.3. Secure and preserve any evidence.
- 4.4. Inform Principal and Senior Management team.
- 4.5. Notify parents/carers of the children involved.
- 4.6. Consider delivering a parent workshop for the school community.
- 4.7. Consider informing the sender's e-mail service provider.
- 4.8. Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of offence.
- 4.9. Inform the LA/MAT e-Safety officer.

## **5. Required actions if malicious posts or threats are made against students or teachers**

- 5.1. Ensure pupils are shielded from further exposure.
- 5.2. Inform site and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally.
- 5.3. Secure and preserve any evidence including URLs, Screenshots and Printouts.
- 5.4. Inform Principal and Senior Leadership Team.
- 5.5. Inform parents.
- 5.6. Send all the evidence to CEOP.
- 5.7. Endeavour to trace the origin and inform police as appropriate.
- 5.8. Inform MAT e-Safety officer.

## **6. Reporting structure**

- 6.1. Issues of cyber bullying should be reported along the same chain as our anti-bullying policy.

## 7. Responding to cyber bullying

- 7.1. Cyber bullying will generally be dealt with through the schools anti-bullying policy. A cyber bullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response.
- 7.2. Key differences might be:
- 7.3. The impact may be extensive in scale and scope
- 7.4. The location may be anytime and anywhere nature of cyber bullying
- 7.5. The anonymous nature of the offence. The person being bullied might not know who their bully is
- 7.6. The motivation behind the offence. The perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
- 7.7. The evidence of the offence. Unlike traditional bullying, it is not always necessary to rely on witnesses or hearsay, the subject of the bullying may have evidence of what happened.

## 8. Support for the person being bullied

- 8.1. The feelings of the victim are paramount and as with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances. For example:
  - Emotional support and reassurance that they haven't done anything wrong;
  - Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that something will be done about it;
  - Liaison with the child's parents/carers to ensure a continuous dialogue of support;
  - Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff;
  - Advice on other aspects of the e-Safety code of conduct to prevent re-occurrence;
  - Discussion with the child's parents/carers to evaluate their online habits ;
  - Age appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online;
  - Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed ;
  - Discussion with the child's parents/carers on whether police action is required (except in cases of CEOP where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents/carers).

## 9. Investigation

9.1. Again, the nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances and the age of the child, it may include, for example:

- Review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages);
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used, however members of staff do not have the authority to search the contents of a phone;
- Identifying and questioning witnesses;
- Contact with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues;
- Requesting a pupil to reveal a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone.

## 10. Working with a perpetrator who is a pupil

10.1. Until such time that the perpetrator is found guilty, they will be considered innocent.

10.2. Work with the perpetrator and any sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy, with the intention of:

- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour.
- Helping bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behaviour.
- Demonstrating that cyber bullying, as any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it.

## 11. Cyber bullying Education

11.1. As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-Safety will take place as part of ICT and PSHE.