



# Grace Academy Darlaston

## Anti- Bullying Policy



This policy has been created in consultation with the Academy's Anti-Bullying Student Ambassadors.

Approved by: LGB

Last reviewed on: October 2022

Next review due by: October 2025

## 1. Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a secure and inclusive atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Academy. If bullying does occur, all students should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **telling** Academy; this means that anyone who is aware of incidents of bullying, should report this to a member of staff.

Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are trained through the [Diana Award](#) to promote being an 'up-stander' and not a 'by-stander' so the students in our Academy feel empowered to speak out and stand up for what is right.

Bullying will not be tolerated in the Academy and will be subject to consequences for the perpetrator, however, we believe in a restorative programme and re-education through the appropriate means and will offer all parties involved the right support.

## 2. Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and support staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and support staff should know what the Academy policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the Academy policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying occurs.
- Students, staff and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- **Bullying will not be tolerated.**

## 3. What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying does not include one-off incidents of conflict or dispute, however, these incidences are also dealt with seriously.

### **Bullying can be:**

- Emotional – being unfriendly/excluding/tormenting (e.g. hiding books/threatening gestures).
- Physical – pushing/kicking/hitting/punching/any other use of violence.
- Racist – racial taunts/graffiti/gestures.
- Sexual\* – Explicit sexual remarks, sexually abusive comments, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention or contact, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching.
- Homophobic – because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Sectarian (Religious) – sectarian taunts/graffiti.
- Verbal – name calling/sarcasm/spreading rumours/teasing
- Cyber – all areas of the internet, such as email & social networking. Threats via mobile (texts/calls). Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera/video facilities.

- Peer on Peer Abuse

#### \* Sexual Violence and Harassment

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

Grace Academy Darlaston is committed to the safeguarding of all students and staff, which includes the prevention and response to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, which is often categorised alongside bullying or peer-on-peer abuse.

The Academy will support students in reporting concerns of criminal activity to the police and follow the guidance in managing risk assessments and support victims of sexual bullying, violence or harassment.

The Academy's extensive RSHE / PSHE curriculum and educational programmes equip students with knowledge of consent, abuse, online safety and a wide range of essential topics. Our robust safeguarding system provides students and staff with the ability to confidently report any concerns of sexually-inappropriate behaviours and for this to be responded to in line with our safeguarding policy and procedure by trained staff.

#### 4. Signs & Symptoms

Sometimes young people do not want to speak up for several reasons. Therefore, it is important that staff, parents and students can recognise the signs that a person may be being bullied.

A child may indicate that he/she is being bullied by signs or behaviour such as:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn/anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens running away
- attempts or threatens suicide
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or damaged books
- has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts to steal money (for the bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts/bruises

- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive/disruptive/unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous/jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

**Report your concerns of bullying via a concern form or a trusted adult.**

**If you feel that the bullying has not stopped, you should continue to report, and you can raise your concerns with any member of staff.**

## **5. Procedures**

- Report bullying incidents to staff via a Concern Form or reporting to a trusted adult
- All incidents reported will be recorded by staff
- All bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated by a member of the pastoral team and the bullying stopped quickly
- In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour
- Bullying outside Academy premises to such an extent as is reasonable will be investigated and acted upon
- All bullying should be reported, even if you are only a witness to the bullying

### Online Incidents

The Academy's view is that parents should be monitoring their child's use of the internet outside of the Academy. However, if the Academy becomes aware of serious abuse of a student or a member of staff on the internet, the Academy may contact parents and take disciplinary action, even if the offence occurred outside of the Academy. Outside agencies may be involved if the internet abuse is a civil matter and the victim decides to press charges.

## **6. Outcomes**

- The bully/bullies may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place by applying disciplinary measures.
- In serious cases, suspension or exclusion will be considered.

- If possible, the students will be reconciled.
- Support will be offered.
- After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure the bullying is not repeated.
- The Academy may apply a restorative programme to support all parties in developing a level of tolerance and understanding to move forward.

## 7. Prevention

We will use various methods for helping children prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Assemblies, tutor times and other educational work embedded throughout the curriculum;
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors promoting our ethos and approach to bullying
- restorative practice for incidents of conflict;
- ensuring that they are familiar with the Academy's rules and the Academy values;
- signing a behaviour contract;
- writing stories/poems/drawing pictures about bullying;
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly; having discussions about bullying and why its prevention is important.

## 8. Recognising Equality and Diversity

The Academy is a wholly inclusive setting. This means prejudice bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. [The Equality Act 2010](#) protects 9 characteristics; these are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

The Act protects people from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct on the basis of any protected characteristic.

Further guidance on bullying related to protected characteristics can be found here:

[Homophobic, transphobic and bi-phobic bullying](#)

[Racist Bullying](#)

<https://diana-award.org.uk/>

## **8. APPENDIX A**

### **Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying**

#### **Who is this advice for?**

This advice is for parents and carers about cyberbullying. It provides advice and information about how they can protect their child from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

#### **Overview**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

Cyberbullying can also involve adults; even though technology has provided wonderful opportunities for both teaching and learning, it has led to some teachers becoming the victims of internet messaging that undermines or ridicules them. It is important that parents make clear that this is not acceptable behaviour and lead by example. What was once a conversation at the school gate between small groups of parents and carers can now become a conversation with perhaps hundreds of “friends” on social networking sites, permanent, with a large audience, and easily shared. Whilst parents and carers have the right to be critical of decisions made by schools, or even individual staff members, they should raise concerns in an appropriate way and not become abusive, or libellous. Open conversations on social networking sites are not private and can easily be reported to school staff, even if it was not the intention to share their views directly.

#### **Social networking**

Young people routinely access social media and much of their social lives are online. This can create a false sense of security; for example chatting online feels different from chatting face to face. It can be easier to say and reveal things that wouldn't be said face to face; be cruel, aggressive or flirtatious. It is important for young people to remember that there are offline consequences to online behaviour.

Comments intended to be funny can often be misinterpreted online whereas if said face to face they could be acceptable as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice and context all help to ensure that comments are taken the right way. This is not the case online. We also know that increasingly younger children are signing up to social network sites and may not have the maturity to handle their online identity in a safe and responsible way.

Social networking can increase existing social pressures and reinforce a sense of isolation; for instance by people purposefully not liking a young person's status update or photo so they seem unpopular, or by excluding them from group chats. Online bullying often involves a large audience and this increases the pressure.

Parents and carers need to understand the way young people communicate with others, and the potential risks. Asking their child simply not to use technology is not a realistic way to prevent or react to cyberbullying. Internet Matters provides an overview of cyber-bullying in more detail and NSPCC - bullying and cyberbullying prevention

Parents and carers have a challenging job. They need to know what their children are doing online and also help them to do it in a safe way. With technology changing on a day-to-day basis, the best way to stay informed is for parents to be involved. [Thinkuknow](#) provides helpful tips on letting your child teach you.

### **Set boundaries**

A good way to supervise children's internet access and set boundaries about what they can and cannot do online is to create an agreement with them. If a child breaks the rules, restrict internet access for an agreed period of time. [Thinkuknow](#) provides helpful tips on agreeing and setting boundaries.

Ensure you use the privacy settings, parental controls and built in internet safety features provided by the major internet service providers. The UK Safer Internet Centre has guides for parental controls.

For parents and carers experiencing any internet safety issues with their children, The Parent Zone provides a national helpline service at - [help@theparentzone.co.uk](mailto:help@theparentzone.co.uk) and The Parent Zone – help.

### **Being involved and talking to children**

Social Networks have a minimum age restriction, usually age thirteen. Parents should talk to their children about the reasons behind the age restriction as they are there for a reason. Accessing such sites too early can expose children to unnecessary bullying.

It is also very important to ensure children and young people feel comfortable about telling their parents things that have happened online. Talking to their children will help parents to understand the ways in which they are using the internet, social media and their mobile phone. Talking to children about responsible behaviour is important as sometimes children who are victims of cyberbullying may also be involved in cyberbullying others. Ensure they know they can go and talk to an adult or parent if they are being bullied and need support. How parents talk to their children will depend on their age. [Childnet](#) gives more detailed information about talking to your child and [antibullyingpro](#) provides practical advice for parents

If you have concerns about cyber-bullying, you can report this using some of the given links and organisations. You can also contact your child's Head of Year or Assistant Head of Key Stage in the first instance.

### **Advice for children**

The following are some things that parents may wish to consider teaching their children about using the internet safely:

- Make sure you use the privacy settings.
- Always respect others – be careful what you say online.
- Be careful what pictures or videos you upload. Once a picture is shared online it cannot be taken back.

Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden.

- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly.

- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations.
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher.
- Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a carer, a teacher or call a helpline like Childline on 08001111 in confidence.
- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.

### **Possible signs of cyberbullying**

It is not always easy to spot the signs of cyberbullying as it can happen all the time, which is a feature that makes it different from other forms of bullying. Be alert to a change in your child's behaviour, for example:

- Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone;
- Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media.
- Many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or outraged.
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends and school mates.
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Low self-esteem.

### **What to do if you suspect a child is being cyberbullied**

If you suspect a child or young person is being harassed or bullied either over the internet or via mobile phone, ask them to give you details. If your child tells you that someone is bothering them online, take it seriously. Offer practical as well as emotional support. Print out the evidence for future reference. Talk to a teacher at your child's school if other pupils at the schools are involved. The Parent Zone-Top tips if your child is being bullied

### **Support for children who are bullied**

School staff should support all pupils who are bullied and develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. Children and young people who have been a victim of images or videos of a sexual nature being uploaded and shared will be particularly vulnerable and affected by bullying the Department has produced advice for schools, available at supporting bullied children.

Cyberbullying on social networks can be upsetting and really knock their confidence. Childline has produced guidance for young people on building their confidence after online bullying available at: Childline - Building confidence after online bullying.

It is also important to involve your child in resolving the issues as this can help to strengthen their self-confidence and restore a sense of emotional safety.



## Useful Resources

### Getting offensive content taken down

If online content is upsetting and inappropriate, and the person or people responsible are known, you need to ensure they understand why the material is unacceptable or offensive and request they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or refuses to take down the material you should contact the social networking site directly to make a report and request the content is taken down. The material posted may be in breach of the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can therefore be removed.

Some service providers will not accept complaints lodged by a third party. In cases of mobile phone abuse, where the person being bullied is receiving malicious calls and messages, the account holder will need to contact the provider directly.

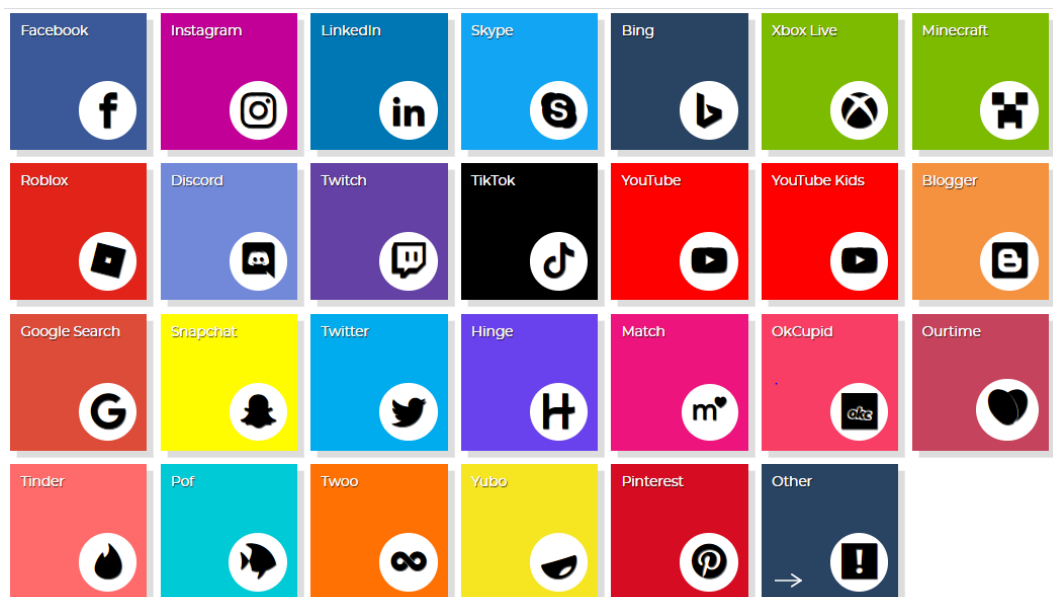
Before you contact a web service provider, it is important to be clear about where the content is, for example by taking a screen shot of the material that includes the web address. If you are requesting they take down material that is not illegal, be clear to point out how it breaks the site's terms and conditions. Where the material is suspected of being illegal you should contact the police directly.

[NSPCC Network](#): Your guide to the social network your kids use – stay up to date and keep your child safe in today's digital world stay up to date and keep your child safe in today's digital world.

### Contact details for social networking sites:

[The UK Safer Internet Centre](#) works with social networking sites to disseminate their safety and reporting tools.

[ReportHarmfulContent](#) is a site where you can gain support for having harmful content removed from the internet and advice on reporting your concern for the site itself. Some of the social media sites they can support with can be seen below.



## Mobile phones

All UK mobile phone providers have malicious or nuisance call, text or picture message centres set up and have procedures in place to deal with such instances. They will help you to change the number of the person being bullied if necessary. If you want to prosecute the perpetrator contact the police. The mobile provider will work closely with the police and can usually trace calls for them.

Some service providers such as Vodafone produce annual magazines for parents and carers (Digital Parenting), giving information and top tips for keeping your children safe online including cyberbullying.

## Service providers

Service Provider	From your mobile	Pay as you go	Pay monthly contracts
<b>O2</b>	4445 or 202	08705 678 678	0870 241 0202
<b>VodaFone</b>	191	03333 040 191	03333 048 069
<b>3</b>	333	08433 733 333	08433 733 333
<b>EE</b>	150	0800 956 6000	0800 956 6000
<b>Virgin</b>	789	0345 6000 789	0345 6000 789
<b>BT</b>		08000 328 751	08000 328 751