

NOTTINGHAM GIRLS' ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

REVIEWED

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Aims of this policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the Nottingham Girls' Academy behaviour policy.

The aim of this document is to set out how Nottingham Girls' Academy define bullying, aim to prevent bullying as far as possible, and help staff, pupils and parents deal with bullying when it occurs.

Principles

We believe that all children deserve to feel safe and cared for in school and that a clear and strong response to bullying when it occurs is essential in creating and maintaining the positive climate required to fulfil our mission and remain true to our values:

Mission

We believe in creating a community empowered with the qualities and qualifications to enter the next phase of life with confidence and ambition.

Values

- We strive to fulfil everyone's learning potential.
- We value high standards, hard work, and a ceaseless desire to improve.
- We provide a safe, kind, nurturing, and inclusive environment.
- We enjoy the journey together.

Definition of Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying, so we have adopted The Anti-Bullying Alliance (UK) definition:

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online."

This definition highlights the fact that bullying can be by an individual or a group against another individual or group**.** It is commonly accepted that bullying is deliberately hurtful (including aggression), causes feelings of distress/fear/loneliness in the victim, is difficult for victims to defend themselves against (as there is an imbalance or perceived imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim) and repeated over a period of time.

The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can take a variety of forms, including:

- Physically hurting or attempting to hurt, harm or humiliate another person or damaging their property.
- Verbal abuse such as name-calling, taunting, mocking, or writing unkind notes
- Emotional manipulation such as: threatening someone, excluding someone, or spreading malicious rumours about them; building negative alliances based on gossip; or deliberately betraying former confidences to humiliate or isolate another pupil.
- Cyberbullying, via social networking websites, phone calls, text messages, photographs, or emails.

- Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying - unpleasant remarks or actions related to any of the following:
    - Race, religion, or culture.
    - Sex (talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way).
    - Gender, gender identity or perceived gender identity.
    - Sexual orientation.
    - Disability or Special Educational Needs.
    - Intellectual or other abilities.
    - Appearance or health conditions.
    - Being adopted or a carer.

Any behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and could constitute bullying. This includes complicit behaviour or actions that may fall short of participating directly in the bullying.

It is no justification that the perpetrator says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by their actions or words.

Much bullying is performed in subtle ways, which are not easy to detect; a bully can use a simple look, word, or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some pupils are adept at changing a bullying situation into an apparently harmless one when an adult approaches. This makes it even more important for the victim or another pupil to be able to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents to be alert to symptoms of bullying.

Bullying is always hurtful to the victim and damaging to the whole school community. Anyone and everyone who is involved in, or witnesses bullying is affected by it. It can cause great distress, unhappiness, and psychological damage. It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or threatening behaviour.

Behaviour That is Not Bullying

Sometimes pupils can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased or have fallen out with a friend. This is not the same as bullying.

Therefore, we are clear that bullying is not:

- One-off occasions of being left out, people not getting along, meanness or nastiness.
- A random act that made someone scared or hurt.
- Falling out, arguing, or fighting with people when both sides have contributed.

Nevertheless, school staff are ready to help and support pupils who have fallen out with friends, but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. However, the strategies we use may be similar because we acknowledge that over a period of time the impact on the pupil may be the same, and the situation could become bullying if it escalates.

Preventing Bullying

We aim to prevent bullying by:

- Fostering a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration. We aim to create a safe, kind, nurturing, and inclusive environment.

- Developing a culture in which diversity is championed and celebrated and in which the school takes a proactive role in educating pupils and other members of the school community in issues around equality.
- Developing a culture in which the vulnerable are protected and incidents which might demonstrate prejudice or intolerance are tackled and addressed with strong sanctions as well as additional education for the perpetrator.
- Encouraging all members of the school community to have high expectations and model how to behave towards each other.
- Raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the curriculum, the PSHE programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week, amongst others.
- Developing pupils' social skills, confidence, resilience, and self-esteem.
- Educating pupils and other members of the school community about how to keep themselves safe when online or using social media or other electronic means of communication, so they take maximum precautions to help prevent themselves being victims of cyber-bullying.
- Making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating, and tackling bullying, and encouraging pupils to report instances of anything they perceive to be bullying.
- Making it clear to all that incidents of cyber-bullying or bullying of any kind (including discriminatory and prejudice based) that occur off the school premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between pupils will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within school.
- Making it as easy as possible for pupils who are being bullied to talk to someone they trust and get help confidentially. This includes speaking to teachers, pastoral staff, and support staff; speaking to Sixth Form mentors; and speaking to parents and carers who, in turn, can speak to school staff.
- Having a strong pastoral team dedicated to pupil welfare and experienced in dealing with bullying issues. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of pupil issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur.
- Seeking and listening to pupil voice, be it through our student equality group, Rainbow club, student council, mentoring programme, or student voice surveys.
- Ensuring that the IT filtering and monitoring systems are effective in protecting members of the school community.
- Working in line with national guidance, and the requirements of our regulatory bodies.

Being Aware – Possible Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or return after a break.
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, work that appears to have been copied, or interfered with or spoilt by others.
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged.
- Change to established habits (for example, changing friendship groups, a sudden rise in negative behaviour points, becoming socially isolated).
- Diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, or late arrival to class.
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or school day.
- Choosing the company of adults.

- Frequent visits to the medical centre with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches, especially at particular times or during particular lessons.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares.
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms, teachers, parents, and fellow pupils should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and contact a member of the pastoral team if they are concerned.

Sadly, some individuals are more vulnerable to bullying, and less likely to speak out – including LGBTQ pupils and those with SEND. Again, staff, parents and peers should bear this in mind in cases of possible or suspected bullying. Further guidance for staff on preventing, identifying, and dealing with such types of bullying can be found by speaking to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

How to Deal with Bullying

If you are being bullied:

- Stay calm and try to appear confident. Tell the bully to stop and get away from the situation as quickly as you can.
- Do not suffer in silence: talk to an adult. This could be a class teacher, tutor, someone from your pastoral team, or any other member of staff you trust. If you are unhappy about talking to a member of staff directly, you could email a member of staff, or talk to someone in your family, a trusted older pupil in school (such as a Sixth Form mentor), or a friend. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or 'snitch': not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue. Remember you may not be the only victim.
- Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it occurred outside the school. We will keep records of what has happened and consult you and support you in whatever action we take.
- Remember being bullied is not your fault – nobody ever deserves to be bullied.
- If you feel you are being bullied by a member of staff you should take the same action as if it were another pupil, that is, report the matter to someone you trust. All forms of bullying are unacceptable, and all reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with irrespective of who the person responsible for the bullying incident might be

If you know that someone else is being bullied:

- Talk to a member of staff, so that the school can take steps to help the victim.
- Stand up for them – studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow pupils to show their support for the victim.
- Be sceptical about rumours concerning other pupils. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person targeted.
- Don't be drawn into simply standing by. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to, and by not taking action it could be argued you are condoning what is happening.

How the Academy will Deal with Bullying

The exact course of action will vary with each situation. The immediate objective should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open and strategies are agreed to help resolve the problem - encouraging all involved to return to responsible, caring behaviour.

- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated immediately.
- Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously.
- It is not possible for any person who receives a report of a bullying incident to promise that it will be kept confidential. However, the action to be taken will be discussed with the victim at every stage.
- Everything that happens will be carefully recorded on CPOMs.
- The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the victim is safe.
- We aim for a peaceful resolution: revenge is not helpful for the victim or appropriate.
- The victim will be supported throughout the process.
- Sanctions may be imposed (see below) but guidance and help will also be available for the perpetrator(s) to help change her/their behaviour.
- Staff will monitor the situation. If bullying recurs, further action will be taken. It is vital that victims of bullying continue to speak to the adults that are trying to help, about further incidents – however small – so a full picture can be established, and additional actions agreed. Sometimes pupils will be given a logbook in which they can record incidents and discuss them at agreed regular intervals with a supportive adult in school.
- The school will keep a log of all bullying incidents, which is categorised and monitored in order to identify trends and inform preventative work in the school and future development of policies and procedures.

Sanctions for Bullying

It is important that those found responsible for bullying are held to account and accept responsibility for the harm caused. Action taken in response to bullying will be intended to communicate unambiguous disapproval of the bully's activities, and this will usually include sanctions. Sanctions help reassure the victim that the bullying will stop; they help those responsible recognise the harm caused by their behaviour and deter them from repeating it; they demonstrate to the school community that bullying is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving in a similar way.

If sanctions are warranted, the person(s) responsible will receive a sanction in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Any sanctions imposed will be fair, proportionate, and reasonable, take account of any special educational needs or disabilities that pupils may have, and consider the needs of vulnerable pupils.

In serious cases of bullying, the Principal will be informed. Academy staff will work with the parents of both the victim and the perpetrator. The school will remain in regular contact with parents until the situation is resolved.

In the most serious cases, the sanction may be a suspension, a Fair Access Supported Transfer, a move to Alternative Provision or Permanent Exclusion.

A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' (Children Act 1989). Where this is the case it may be necessary to make a report to the Social Services and in certain cases the police.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that working with parents/guardians is essential to establishing the school's anti-bullying ethos and resolving any issues that arise.

- Parents are encouraged to reinforce the principles of the Anti-Bullying Policy at home.
- Parents are asked to communicate with the relevant pastoral staff directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others.
- In any serious case of bullying parents will be informed by the school and may be invited in to discuss the matter. We will keep in regular contact with parents until the issue is resolved.

Links to Other Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- NGA School Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- GAT Pupil behaviour and Exclusions Policy
- GAT Equal Opportunities Policy
- GAT IT Acceptable Use Policy
- GAT Online Safety Policy
- GAT Relationships and Sex Policy
- GAT Social Media Policy
- NGA RSE Policy
- PSHE schemes of work

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy and the school's anti bullying strategies will be evaluated annually through a review of the bullying log and consultation with the school council.

Key Contacts

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