



# Anti-Bullying Policy

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06/10/25	1.0	Statutory change	Annually

To be read alongside all relevant BOA Digital Technologies Academy policies and procedures including Safeguarding and Relationships for Learning (Behaviour) policy.

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## **Aim**

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that all students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, free from the fear of bullying, and that staff feel equally safe and respected. Bullying is anti-social behaviour that affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at BOA Digital.

We recognise that students can only fully benefit from the opportunities available to them when they feel secure, valued and able to thrive within the academy environment. Bullying is also contrary to British values, as it undermines the fundamental principles of mutual respect, individual liberty, and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds.

At BOA Digital, we are committed to fostering a culture where every individual feels safe, respected and included, and where diversity is actively celebrated. Any behaviour that seeks to harm, isolate or intimidate others is in direct opposition to these values and will not be accepted within our academy community.

## **Statutory duties of school**

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provide that maintained schools/academies must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

The academy recognises that bullying, including peer-on-peer abuse, may constitute a safeguarding concern and will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual violence and harassment, harmful sexual behaviours, and online exploitation or coercion.

## **Scope of this policy and links to other policies**

The academy fully endorses the principles laid out in the DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance document published in 2017.

This policy includes:

- Bullying of students by students within the academy.
- Bullying of and/or by students outside of the academy, where the academy is aware of it.
- Bullying of staff by students within or outside the academy.

Allegations about bullying of students by staff will be dealt with under the academy's Safeguarding Policy.

## **Definition**

Bullying occurs when a person or group deliberately seeks to hurt, intimidate or harm another individual repeatedly, where there is an imbalance of power. This can be through words, actions or behaviours which deny the dignity of another person.

Bullying may result in a person feeling:

- Physically and/or mentally hurt or worried.
- Unsafe and/or frightened.
- Unable to do well and achieve.
- Different, alone, unimportant and/or unvalued.
- Lacking confidence or self-worth
- Unable to see a happy and exciting future for yourself.

For BOA Digital to be successful in 'valuing and respecting all individuals' and in 'providing opportunities for students to develop their confidence and self-respect', bullying must be identified and eradicated.

### **What does bullying look like, feel like, sound like?**

Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is meant to hurt – the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it.
- Happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'one-off' incident.
- Involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.

It can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting or using violence.
- Racist: racial taunts, inappropriate jokes, graffiti and gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments / gender based violence / sexual violence / sexual harassment.
- Homophobic/Biphobic: discriminating against someone because of their sexual orientation.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing.
- Cyber: all areas of social media, such as posting threatening or personal comments / images / videos about someone.
- Transphobic: founded on gender identity.
- Peer-on-peer: verbal or physical, by person or by electronic, on-line or written means and can be directed at both staff and pupils

This list is not exhaustive.

### **Who bullies?**

Everyone has the capacity to bully. There are no completely reliable predisposition diagnoses. However, those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equal opportunities and inclusion at the center of all anti-bullying work in schools and academies.

### **Who is bullied?**

Anyone can be bullied – young person, parent/carer/guardian, staff member or volunteer. People

who suffer bullying are often perceived by others to be different. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent, perceived inappropriate behaviour. Frequently the perceived difference comes from assigning an individual to a group. Such bullying would then be designated as class, disability, homophobic, racist, religious or sexist. People can be assigned or be a member of more than one group.

The academy recognises that some students are more vulnerable to bullying, and these may require closer monitoring and support, including:

- Students with SEND
- Looked After Children
- LGBTQ+ students
- Students with mental health needs

### **Identifying and reporting a concern about bullying**

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Students who are bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absence or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from the academy. All members of staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

Students who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour. Students who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

All students will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- Talking to a member of staff of their choice.
- Contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support.
- Making a report using the appropriate academy platforms such as Class Charts, MCAS

A member of staff, who believes that he or she is being bullied or harassed, will be encouraged to report it to a colleague of their choice. Parents will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the academy in tackling it. Trying to resolve bullying by approaching the bully or their families themselves can lead to problems escalating.

### **Responding to reports about bullying Academy**

The academy will take the following steps when dealing with concerns about bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, it will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware of it.
- A clear account of the concern will be recorded on CPOMS (to enable tracking of patterns, identification of repeated behaviour, and safeguarding oversight).
- Parents and other relevant adults will be kept informed.
- Restorative justice approach will be used whenever possible.
- Appropriate actions inline with the Academy behaviour policy will be followed under serious misbehaviour.

### **Supporting students & staff**

All staff will receive regular training on recognising, preventing and responding to bullying, including online harms and peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a senior staff member.
- Providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed.
- Offering continuous support.
- The use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies e.g. educational psychology, where appropriate.
- Offer help and advice on how to remove online material.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved.
- Establishing the wrongdoing and need to change.
- Informing parents to help change the attitude of the pupil.
- The use of special interventions and/or referrals to other agencies where appropriate.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of the academy premises
- Confiscation of mobile phones in line with DfE (2022) 'Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools'.
- Suspension
- Off site direction
- Permanent exclusion

Where mediation has been agreed upon by all parties, the appropriate member of staff will organize group or 1-to-1 work to explain the negative effects of bullying to the perpetrators and their cohort.

### **Parents**

- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and the academy. However, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the Concerns and Complaints Policy.
- Where a student is involved in bullying others outside the academy, i.e. in the street or through the use of internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the academy in addressing their child's behaviour, for example, restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone.
- Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate.

### **Preventative measures**

Academy leaders and the governors understand that our response to bullying does not start at which a young person or family report instances of bullying. The academy will:

- Promote a positive ethos of good behaviour at the academy where students treat each other with mutual respect
- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, tutorial time, assemblies, subject areas and informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- Give care and support to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all students feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously in line with the school ethos.
- Will seek to participate in local and national initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week.
- Will seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive, anti-bullying education.
- Consider the use of specific strategies, e.g. peer mentoring on a regular basis subject to available resources.
- Refer to the LA guidelines on 'Bullying in the Workplace' where an adult in the community believes that he/she is being bullied by another adult.

### **Promotion of this Policy**

The policy and methods for reporting bullying concerns will be promoted throughout the academy, for example in information packs for new students and staff and through regular awareness raising activities with existing students and parents. Student surveys will be carried out in each year group.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The Vice Principal at the academy will be identified to lead on the implementation of the policy and act as the link person with the Local Authority and outside agencies. They will use CPOMS to support in the analysis of bullying to identify any trends and respond accordingly. The academy understands that cyber-bullying techniques can develop quickly and as such will keep up-to-date with new social media platforms and their use.

The academy recognises that some types of bullying could be a criminal offence, such as harassment or inappropriate communications through technology. The academy will as such use external agencies when appropriate.