



MacIntyre Academies Venture Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures governing the action to be taken in respect of bullying concerns relating to Children and Young People at Venture Academy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Macintyre Academies employees, including volunteers and supply/agency staff as well as Local Advisory and Trust Board Members.

3. Introduction

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equalities Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, October 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 years, 2015

This policy should be read alongside Venture Academy:

- Curriculum
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality Policy

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour may be defined as 'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time and on purpose, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or groups of pupils. Bullying behaviour results in pain and distress to the victim. The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying behaviour as "*Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online*".

Behaviours Often Associated with Bullying

Venture Academy recognises that bullying can take many forms and can affect any child or young person. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example on ground of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or because a child is classed as looked after. Bullying behaviours can be motivated by actual differences between young people or perceived differences.

Bullying behaviours can take many forms and can include:

- Physical assault and/or injury
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyberbullying – bullying online via a mobile phone, tablet, computer or other device e.g. social media, online gaming, email etc.

Venture Academy also recognises that incidents occur between pupils which may not be deemed as 'bullying' but still require support and intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as 'relational conflicts; or 'falling out'. Relational conflict differs to bullying as it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance) and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally, not repetitively, or occur unintentionally or by accident. Not all relational conflict leads to bullying but we are aware that occasionally it can and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Although bullying behaviours and relational conflicts can take place between individuals we recognise that it can also take place in front of others (either physically or virtually). Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as bullying or a relational conflict, Venture Academy will address the situation and support our young people to resolve any negative feelings. We will challenge, address and monitor all incidents of bullying behaviours to ensure that it does not continue and that all pupils feel supported – this includes the victim, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders and the wider school community.

What does bullying behaviour look like?

At Venture Academy we will always consider the context within which incidents and/or bullying behaviours occur. We will consider motivations behind the behaviours and the age, stage of development and needs of the pupils involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all pupils involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

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|---------------------------|---|
| Physical: | Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, biting or any use of violence |
| Verbal: | Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threats, belittling |
| Emotional: | Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, embarrassing, ridicule, intimidating, manipulating and coercion |
| Racist: | Relating to race, religion or culture including racial taunts, graffiti or gestures |
| Sexual: | Unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, sexually abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films and other materials etc |
| Cyber/Online: | Posting on social media, sharing photos and/or personal data without consent, sending hurtful text messages, social exclusion, threats via online gaming chat facilities etc. At it's most extreme online bullying may include the use or sharing of pornographic material such as 'revenge porn'. |
| Prejudice Related: | Derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This may be directed to individuals because of their race, ethnicity or nationality; because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, non-binary etc or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling or friend who is; because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviours are generally used to refer to something or someone as 'inferior' |
| Indirect: | Can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and radicalisation |

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms of bullying behaviour are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

Bullying Behaviours and Autism

Children and young people with an autism spectrum condition (ASC) have difficulty 'reading' social situations and knowing how to engage in ever-changing social contexts. They can find it hard to predict other people's behaviour and to interpret their body language and facial expressions to gauge what they are thinking or feeling. This can make it difficult for a child or young person with an ASC to understand other people's intentions and makes them an easy target for bullying behaviour. Because children and young people with an ASC may be unaware that other 'judge' their behaviour they may be especially vulnerable to bullying in the community.

Due to impairments in social understanding and imagination, bullying issues are perhaps even more complex for people with an ASC. For example, a vulnerable pupil may not recognise that they are being bullied and believe themselves to be part of the group because they are being paid attention. Another example may be where a pupil with an ASC becomes obsessional about another pupil and targets them in either a positive or negative way.

Additionally, due to theory of mind impairments, most pupils with an ASC have very little understanding of the feelings of others. This makes it difficult for them to be sure that the behaviours were deliberately hurtful. For example, pupil A may shout at pupil B not because they want to upset them but because they are curious about pupil B's reaction.

Children and young people with an ASC can make direct remarks but have no intention of causing harm. Such comments cannot be considered as bullying behaviour but they will be addressed so the pupil learns about the impact of their remarks on others and how to interact more appropriately.

All of these issues will be explored through staff training and all Venture Academy staff will be trained to understand and address these from an autistic spectrum perspective.

Bullying Behaviours in the context of Trauma and Attachment

A cohort has a large proportion of pupils who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which include Trauma and Attachment based issues. This can result in children developing difficulties in their social relationships and self-regulation skills. This is often rooted in chemical issues related to cortisol levels in the brain being impacted by past experiences and/or 'survival techniques' that children have developed. It is imperative that when children with a history of ACE's are identified as displaying bullying behaviours that this is approached through Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware approaches, not in a way that causes 'shame' for a child. It can be very difficult as a parent/ or carer (especially if your child has been potentially or actually harmed) to consider the wider context, but we urge that all adults involved in supporting children through an issue of 'bullying behaviour, model compassion and understanding for all parties, in order to bring about effective and life long change for all.

Where can bullying take place?

At Venture Academy we understand that bullying behaviours are not confined to the school premises, Bullying can and does take place outside of the school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community, Bullying may also take place online. We will offer support and guidance to pupils, parents/carers and families who have experienced any type of bullying whether this has taken place inside school, outside school or online. We are committed to working with external agencies where appropriate to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

Bullying and Mental Wellbeing

'Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community' (Promoting Mental Health: Concepts, Emerging Evidence Practice, World Health Organisation (WHO, 2005).

At Venture Academy we want to provide an environment that promotes good wellbeing and prevention of bullying and discrimination is key to this. Bullying behaviours have a significant impact on children and young people's emotional wellbeing and identity. The pupils at Venture Academy have a diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health needs which means they may be more vulnerable to bullying behaviours and its effects. We ensure that all of our pupils and young people are supported with their mental health needs in a non-stigmatising way.

We understand that disruptive, bullying or challenging behaviour can be a result of difficulty to express distress. We support the emotional needs of those who are being bullied or who bully others. We will respond to bullying effectively, listening to our young people to prevent them from developing other coping strategies such as self-isolation or self-harm which would affect their ability to engage in learning and their wider relationships. We support our young people to talk about the effects of bullying behaviours.

Reporting Bullying Concerns

At Venture Academy, we want pupils, parents/carers, staff and visitors to confidently report any bullying concerns and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. We are committed to supporting and safeguarding all our young people involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to the bullying behaviours and the wider school community.

We have clear reporting systems in the school and the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year to ensure they meet the needs of all.

We ask that all pupils report any concerns of bullying behaviours to a member of school staff – this can be ANY member of staff whether teaching or non-teaching – this can be the form tutor, the class TA, a member of SLT, the Pastoral Team or the school office. We talk about trusted adults regularly with our young people to remind them of who they can report any concerns to.

If a pupil does report concerns about bullying to a member of staff they will listen to the pupil and make notes of their concerns. They will reassure them that they will be supported and discuss next steps with the pupil. The member of staff will make a formal record of the pupils concerns on the school reporting system (IRIS Adapt) and other relevant members of staff including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be alerted. The member of staff will immediately alert the DSL in person if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

If the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed as 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict' school staff will ensure the pupils involved are still supported and help them resolve any issues or concerns.

Parents/Carers

At Venture Academy we understand that it can be difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying behaviours or is an alleged perpetrator of such behaviours. We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying behaviours that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask they contact their child's form tutor or the Safeguarding Lead to report their concerns. A meeting may be scheduled to discuss the concerns in more detail and other members of staff such as the Senior Leadership Team may be involved if deemed appropriate.

We will endeavour to keep all parties informed of progress and any developments but we will also need to adhere to the GDPR which may mean at times, we are not able to share certain information or updates.

School Staff

At Venture, our staff work closely with pupils and therefore may notice a change in behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil, parent/carer or another member of staff. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that the

pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying behaviours or even perpetrating bullying they will act immediately and report their concerns to a DSL.

Visitors

We ensure that all visitors are aware of our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and who they should report any concerns to. We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed or have been told about, that they report their concerns in person at their earliest opportunity to a DSL or a member of SLT.

4. Objectives and Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviours

At Venture Academy we are committed to the safety and welfare of our pupils. We adopt strategies that promote friendly and positive behaviours and discourage bullying behaviours. We will ensure that:

- All the local advisory board members, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers are trained or informed to understand what bullying behaviours look like to be aware of the signs of bullying and how to raise concerns
- We teach our pupils about bullying and how to abide by this policy ensuring they understand that concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively
- We raise awareness during anti-bullying week
- We train and support staff to promote positive relationships and implement the PSHE curriculum, supporting social development for our pupils
- We discuss, monitor and review our antibullying policy on a regular basis at team meetings and LAB meetings
- All pupils and parents/carers know what the policy is on bullying behaviours and what they should do if they have concerns about bullying
- We respond to all concerns raised about bullying, reporting back on actions taken
- We involve other agencies in developing our policy and practice, seeking advice and training

5. Responsibilities

Principal

- To oversee the implementation of this policy, including in induction and ongoing training for staff, volunteers and pupils on placement and to oversee the review and updating of the policy every 2 years
- To ensure appropriate and timely training is delivered to all staff
- To ensure the ethos of a caring, respectful and safe environment is evident throughout Venture Academy
- To ensure effective joint working with all the schools in Macintyre Academies Trust (MAT) and other external agencies and organisations
- To make recommendations to the LAB for any amendments to policy and procedure
- To ensure appropriate learning opportunities, regarding bullying, are delivered to pupils
- To oversee the monitoring and investigation of all allegations of bullying, ensuring parents are informed and that appropriate interventions are put in place
- To review bullying data on a half termly basis
- To analyse data and report to the local advisory board on bullying incidents and concerns on a termly basis

All Staff

- To notify their line manager of incidents of bullying behaviour and to follow the appropriate procedures i.e. record all incidents and concerns on the system (IRIS)
- Senior Leaders are responsible for ensuring all staff are well supported and have the opportunity for post-incident debriefings
- All employees have a duty of care that requires them to act in the best interest of our pupils and to treat all pupils fairly, with respect and understanding.
- All employees have a duty to report any concerns about bullying to the Executive Principal/Head of School or if appropriate to the LAB or Group Director

- To respond to all young people in a calm and positive manner
- To provide positive role models to all young people ensuring that their behaviour reflects the good practice of Venture Academy
- To value every young person and their right to learn free from bullying and discrimination
- To enable and support pupils to understand what bullying is, how it may affect them and others and how to manage challenging situations
- To work with their team, staff in other settings, pupils, parents and carers to ensure that strategies are developed together and that there is continuity of approach
- To liaise with other agencies regarding the prevention of bullying to pupils following inclusion programmes

Volunteers and Pupils on Placement/Work Experience

- To follow the anti-bullying policy and guidance given
- To request support and advice when necessary

Pupils

- To respect those around them and treat others as they would wish to be treated
- To work with staff to develop and follow a set of ground rules
- To report all incidents of bullying to a member of staff

Parents and Carers

- To keep Venture Academy informed about concerns, problems and family circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour or well-being
- To work with staff to plan and implement individual support plans that recognise and combat bullying

6. Procedures

Why is it important to respond to bullying behaviour?

Bullying hurts and can have a long term and serious impact upon a person's life and well-being. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying behaviours. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving.

All educational settings have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. At Venture Academy we understand that bullying may be considered a form of abuse and will be treated as a child protection/safeguarding concern. We also understand that bullying may be a criminal matter under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1968, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.

Prevention

At Venture Academy we are committed to preventing bullying behaviours. We use the following methods:

- We provide young people with clear messages and expectations to promote respectful relationships, language and positive behaviour
- We recognise and celebrate diversity
- We invest in staff training and skills e/g/ to understand LGBTQ+ pupils
- We work with pupils to develop ground rules and codes of conduct for positive behaviour
- We ensure that pupils have appropriate targets in their Personal Plan relating to behaviour
- Our PSHE curriculum helps pupils to understand what constitutes bullying, its impact and the roles of people involved including bystanders
- We support pupils to develop the personal, social and emotional skills that protect them from bullying
- Pupils are taught and encouraged to report bullying incidents to staff
- We address online safety with pupils and parents/carers

- We have defined levels of supervision for pupils between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes
- We provide pupils with safe places and people that they can go to if they are feeling vulnerable
- We use social stories about bullying behaviour
- We use Anti-Bullying week to revisit staff training and to raise awareness throughout Venture Academy
- We display signs saying what to do if pupils are worried, upset or being bullied
- We have annual staff training prior to Anti-Bullying week

Interventions

- Pupils and parents/carers can raise concerns with any member of staff about bullying or report an incident of bullying, Lead people are identified.
- Pupils witnessing bullying should provide support to their peer and bring this to the attention of an adult
- Staff will record and investigate all incidents of reported bullying promptly using Venture Academy incident reporting system
- Any alert will be responded to by a member of the school's safeguarding team (DSL)
- The school will respond to any alerts and concerns involving its pupils, even if it has taken place outside of school
- Appropriate investigations will be undertaken to gather the facts about any alleged bullying incident in or out of school
- The DSL will make a referral to the Integrated Front Door (IFD) or police if appropriate
- Parents/carers will be informed and, in serious cases, will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- Interventions will be planned to enable pupils to recognise what bullying is and to develop strategies to overcome it
- Short and longer term monitoring will be used to ensure that strategies to overcome a bullying incident have been successful

Supporting a victim of bullying

It is essential that all individuals who have experienced bullying behaviour are provided with timely and appropriate support. This may include one or more of the following:

- Active listening
- Advice
- Assertiveness training
- Named pupil/staff member to provide appropriate support
- Regular checking with the pupil regarding their well-being

Outcomes

- Where necessary, interventions will be planned to help pupils who display bullying behaviours to acknowledge their responsibility, to recognise the harm caused and to support them to change their behaviours
- The perpetrator(s) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Restorative strategies may be used.
- All necessary steps will be taken to safeguard the target of bullying behaviours
- As per our Behaviour Policy we will not impose a generic sanctions system for bullying incidents or other acts, instead we take a 'some actions bring particular consequences' stance to support learning
- After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying behaviours do not recur

7. Breaches and Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt within the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Principal and LAB.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaints policy and procedures. This is available online on the school website and on request from the school office.

8. Monitoring Compliance and Impact

We will review this policy at least once every two years, or following an incident that suggests the need for review. We will consider developments in technology that impact on bullying. We will monitor bullying by:

- Recording and investigating all reported incidents of bullying
- Reviewing records every half term
- Reporting on bullying to the LAB on a termly basis, or as requested

We will consider that we are succeeding if:

- A high percentage of pupils are able to demonstrate an awareness of what bullying behaviour is and what to do to stop it
- Pupils say they would go to a member of staff if they were feeling unhappy or worried
- Staff demonstrate understanding of this policy
- Analysis of data shows a decrease in reported incidents of bullying behaviours