# Amplify Education

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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# 1.Statement of Intent

This document sets out the policy for Anti-Bullying within Amplify Education (the Trust). In Amplify Education, bullying is never acceptable; everyone has the right to be treated with respect and we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment where all within our learning community know that they belong.

We take action to prevent bullying but also ensure that there are robust procedures in place for any potential bullying incidents to be reported. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. We understand that repeated bullying may need to be managed as a safeguarding issue rather than solely a behaviour issue.

The policy and school procedures are developed and implemented in consultation with pupils, staff and parents.

# 2.Values, Principles and Standards

Amplify is **a bold voice for Bristol** - speaking with ambition and channelling the city's spirit into a shared journey of belief, opportunity and citizenship.

We **build belief** in every young person, shaping a future where every voice matters, every story is heard, and every learner moves forward with confidence.

We **expand opportunities** and nurture potential to enrich each learner's journey with a passport of inclusive, academic, creative and musical experiences.

We **strengthen citizenship** through connecting communities, educating to build unity and pride. This is Bristol, represented.

Any data collected, stored or managed as a result of this policy is in accordance with UK and EU law, and in line with the Trust's ethos and values.

This Policy has been framed in accordance with the guidance on best practice from the Department for Education (DfE).

# 3. Objectives and Scope

## 3.1 Policy objectives

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and celebrate the diversity within our Trust community. In Amplify Education, bullying of any kind is never acceptable behaviour. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to experience bullying.

The specific aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that all those connected with Amplify Education are aware of not only what bullying is, but our opposition to it. This includes off-site bullying and cyber-bullying.
- ensure all stakeholders know what they should do to prevent bullying
- clarify the school's response to any bullying incidents
- make clear each person's responsibilities regarding the eradication of bullying behaviour in our school.

## 3.2 Legislative and statutory guidance

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2026) Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)
- Behaviour in Schools Advice for Headteachers and School Staff, DfE 2024
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017

## 3.3 Associated policies

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Safeguarding and Child-Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Complaints Policy

# 4.Responsibilities and Accountabilities

## 4.1 Responsibilities of the Trust central team

- To ensure that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation
- To ensure the policy is well communicated to all Headteachers
- To ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed
- To undertake pupil voice, typically through Trust wide pupil voice surveys, to gather data and understanding of bullying and perceptions of bullying and report on this to governors / trustees

## 4.2 Responsibilities of the headteacher

- To ensure the implementation of and compliance with current policy and procedures at school level
- To monitor systems, resources, impact and actions related to the policy
- To ensure the policy is well communicated and staff understand their role in its implementation
- To handle any complaints at school level which arise through this policy

## 4.3 Responsibilities of school leadership

- To ensure staff are inducted into the procedures surrounding this policy and any updates
- To provide training to ensure policy compliance
- To hold sessions for parents and pupils as required, to ensure the policy is understood
- To analyse and understand termly bullying data and correspond accordingly
- To undertake pupil voice activities, such as surveys, to gather data and understanding of bullying and perceptions of bullying and ensure any key safeguarding concerns are addressed

## 4.4 Responsibilities of all staff

- To uphold the whole school approach to the policy through modelling expected standards and utilising appropriate procedures
- To keep up to date with policy changes over time
- To promote a collaborative and inclusive ethos where all pupils can thrive
- To feed back to school leaders where implementation of the policy is challenging.

## 4.5 Responsibilities of parents/carers

- To support the implementation of the policy with the child, as appropriate
- Where a parent has feedback on the implementation of the policy, to raise this directly with the school while continuing to work in partnership with the school

## 4.6 Responsibilities of pupils

- To uphold school rules and expectations and thereby comply with the implementation of the policy
- To feed back on the implementation of the policy through appropriate means, such as school council, to school staff

## 4.7 Responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

- To lead on the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- To ensure all pupils understand what bullying is and that it is unacceptable behaviour
- To ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to implement the Anti-Bullying Policy effectively.

# 5. Definition of bullying

Bullying is the **repetitive**, **intentional hurting** of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. Children in many of our schools may refer to bullying as incidents that have taken place **S**everal **T**imes **O**n **P**urpose (**STOP**). Bullying can be **physical, verbal or emotional/psychological** (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2024).

It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions we have set out below. Bullying can be, but is not limited to:

**Verbal abuse** e.g. name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.

**Physical abuse** e.g. pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching.

**Emotional abuse** e.g. isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.

**Sexual abuse** e.g. unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films.

**Indirect abuse** including the exploitation of individuals.

**Cyberbullying/online abuse** e.g.

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- using AI to bully a peer, for example in the form of 'deep fakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

As a school, we acknowledge our responsibility to investigate and support families if bullying occurs off the premises. The school reserves the right to discipline for behaviour off the premises, where incidents impact on relationships within school.

### Bullying is not …

It is important to understand that bullying is **different to 'falling out'.** It is vital for pupils to have the opportunity to select and build friendships, and the making and breakdowns of friendships are an important part of growing up. It is essential to teach pupils the skills to repair relationships and enable them to utilise these without adults always intervening on their behalf. Sometimes, on these occasions, adult intervention may be necessary. However, it may not be classed as bullying when pupils have had a disagreement or physical altercation, but there is no imbalance of power.

# 6. Vulnerabilities to bullying

Some groups of pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying. These include pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children in care, pupils from minority ethnic groups or faiths, young carers, LGBTQ+ pupils and those perceived to be LGBTQ+. Pupils who are vulnerable to bullying are often the same pupils who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those

who are going through a personal or family crisis. Staff are aware of this and provide bespoke support in response to any incidents of bullying.

We recognise that some pupils with SEND can lack the skills to recognise or report incidents of bullying. Our staff are aware of the increased vulnerabilities of these pupils as well as barriers to reporting. Our reporting procedures are varied and accessible so that all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to report incidents of bullying. Staff are also alert to the signs of bullying and are particularly vigilant for our most vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND.

# 7. An Anti-Bullying Culture

Amplify Education promotes inclusion and celebrates diversity. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we do not tolerate any discrimination or harassment on the grounds of protected characteristics including disability, race, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, gender-reassignment or pregnancy/having a child.

## 7a. Preventing bullying

We believe that our anti-bullying procedures should not start at the point at which a pupil has been bullied. We create a positive culture where pupils treat one another and school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. We all ensure pupils know how to report any concerns or worries, including potential incidents of bullying.

We proactively gather information about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and we develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies.

We take a proactive approach to preventing bullying, by:

- promoting an inclusive ethos in our school
- building a shared understanding of the signs and symptoms that indicate someone may be experiencing bullying
- showing that offensive comments or language are never acceptable
- providing clear guidance for staff and pupils on appropriate physical boundaries and education for all ages on consensual touch through Personal, Social and Health Education
- the creation of specific safe spaces at break and lunch times for pupils who may feel lonely or isolated
- educating staff, pupils and parents/carers about bullying issues and the action they can take to stop bullying (e.g. curriculum content, parent and carer events, staff training, participation in Anti-Bullying Week)
- regular inclusion of bullying issues in assemblies and class time

- displaying information around the school so that all pupils know staff who can help if they are worried about something.

In addition, we promote fundamental British values, by proactively challenging derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour, including that which is racist, misogynistic, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. We take a victim-centred approach and will challenge the use of prejudice-related language or behaviours in our school even if it appears to be being done without any intent.

## 7b. Recognising signs and symptoms of bullying

Staff, parents/carers and pupils should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying and should follow school reporting procedures if they have concerns. Signs might include:

- **Physical indicators** e.g. unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- **Emotional indicators** e.g. losing interest in school, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.
- **Behavioural indicators** e.g. asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

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

## 7c. Reporting bullying

Pupils should report all bullying incidents to a trusted adult within school, following the school's anti-bullying procedures.

Parents/carers can report any bullying concerns to any adult within school or directly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL will be notified of all incidents that involve bullying behaviours, either directly or by the staff remember receiving the report.

Any reports of incidents or observed incidents will be recorded by members of staff on CPOMs and the DSL will be alerted on the same working day. If online bullying has occurred, where possible, copies of the bullying will be attached.

## 7d. Responding to bullying

We have anti-bullying procedures in place which include how we respond to alleged bullying.

As a school, our response ensures:

- accurate recording of the incident which is communicated to relevant staff members
- pupils involved are listened to by trusted adults
- parents/carers of pupils involved are included in the response and their voices are heard
- relevant external agencies are involved if required, such as police, social care
- there is a thorough investigation into the alleged incident which is clearly documented
- the implementation of timely and appropriate support/interventions to support pupils involved. These will be documented and dates for review set.

After incidents have been investigated and an appropriate response has been implemented, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Bullying rarely takes place in isolation so we will always consider the involvement of the wider peer group. Additional whole school or cohort work need to take place to reinforce the school's position on bullying or to explore different aspects of bullying with the peer group.

# 8. The school's anti-bullying procedures

Schools review anti-bullying procedures annually and ensure they include the following:

- measures to prevent bullying e.g. environment, curriculum, interventions, events
- reporting procedures for pupils and parents/carers
- response to alleged bullying: this includes involvement of pupils, parents/carers and staff
- recording procedures.

Any-bullying procedures may also include:

- an anti-bullying code/mantra
- child friendly version of the policy/procedures
- parent/carer information.

# 9. Complaints

Where parents/carers have concerns about bullying, they should first raise their concerns with the class teacher/tutor or SENCO. We will try to resolve the concerns, working collaboratively with the parents/carers to understand and address them. If their concerns are not resolved, parents and carers should contact the Headteacher. If again concerns are not resolved, parents and carers are welcome to submit their complaint formally, following Amplify Education's Complaints Policy.