Stone Soup Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Foreword

The Department for Education (DfE) has published advice on preventing and tackling bullying in 2017, which is for school leaders, staff and governing bodies. The document has been produced to help schools prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy, to understand their legal responsibilities in this area, and to understand the DfE's approach.

The document replaces previous advice to schools. It outlines, in one place, the government's approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools have to tackle bullying, and the principles that underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools. It also lists further resources through which school staff can access specialist information on the specific issues that they face.

The advice has been included as Appendix 1 and the good practice it identifies has been included in this policy.

This policy on preventing bullying has regard to DfE Guidance "Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools".

The Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, new duties on schools and other public bodies came into force in April 2011. The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation. The Act brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender, with which schools are already bound to comply, and it extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities, some of which they will already be doing. It will apply to school policies for tackling prejudice based bullying. Stone Soup Academy School staff and governors will take heed of the Act and ensure all types of bullying are recognised and acted upon.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all students in our care are protected from bullying. It is the responsibility of The Stone Soup School staff to ensure that students are protected from bullying at all times. All students will be taught in an environment where bullying is unacceptable.

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group, spreading rumours, cyber bullying)

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Students must be encouraged to report bullying in academies/schools.

- All teaching and ancillary staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this Anti-Bullying policy
- Consideration should be given to ensuring "user friendly" reporting practices e.g. a box for anonymous reporting by students

2 Context

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

Statutory duty of schools

Under Section 61 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schools are required to establish measures to promote good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. These procedures must be communicated clearly to staff, students, and parents.

3 Responsibilities of staff

At Stone Soup Academy, our commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment is underpinned by five core values: **Kindness, Positivity, Respect, Celebration, and Collaboration**. These values were developed through meaningful engagement with both staff and students. Our values create a culture where bullying is less likely to occur by promoting empathy, inclusion, and shared responsibility across the academy.

Staff should:

- Actively listen to students to identify any circumstances in which a child may be being bullied
- Ensure that there is regular discussion with the students to help them protect themselves and encourage them to speak out if bullying occurs

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Principal using our CPOMS

- The Principal will ensure interviews for all concerned and it be recorded
- The Principal will decide whether a referral should be made to the Senior Manager for Safeguarding
- Parents will be kept informed
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned

Students

Students who have been bullied will be supported by members of staff in the following ways:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their Personal Coach or member of staff of their choice
- Reassuring the student
- Offering continuous support
- Taking measures to restore self-esteem and confidence
- All students will have access to and understand the company complaints procedure.
- informing parents or guardians (with permission of student)

Students who have bullied will be helped by members of staff in the following ways:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the student became involved
- Establishing the wrongdoing and need to change
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the student

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Minor fixed-term suspensions
- Major fixed-term suspensions
- End of placement
- Permanent exclusion

Within the curriculum, the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, form tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

All of our students are on the SEN register, and we take this into account when investigating bullying by ensuring that our responses are sensitive to individual needs, communication styles, and any underlying vulnerabilities that may affect both the victim and the perpetrator.

4 Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Stone Soup Academy recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Stone Soup Academy will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our **anti-bullying/behaviour** policy.

5 Monitoring, evaluation and review

- Incidents of bullying will be recorded, monitored and addressed on a day-to-day basis, through staff supervision, team meetings, and general care practice and CPOMS
- All incidents will be reported to the Executive Principal, Principal & Assistant Principal for Behaviour and Attitudes immediately
- Incidents will be recorded both for individuals and also for the service as a whole
- Monitoring of Incidents will address ways to ensure safety for the young person and to also identify any trends which may need addressing in partnership with other professionals
- The school will maintain records of all incidents of bullying and include details in the Annual Report to The Governors. The Principal will ensure that these records are available for inspection by OFSTED and the Local Authority Quality Assurance processes
- As of 23/24 we have added a new bullying questionnaire that is used by personal coaches and parents after a student has been subject to bullying. See appendix 2
- The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school
- Our complaints procedure is accessible to all, including parents, carers, and students. If anyone is not satisfied with how a bullying incident has been addressed, they are encouraged to raise their concerns through this process

Appendix 1

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION ADVICE: PREVENTING AND TACKLING BULLYING

ADVICE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS, STAFF AND GOVERNING BODIES

About this advice

This document has been produced to help schools prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy, to understand their legal responsibilities in this area and to understand the Department's approach.

Who is this advice for?

This advice is primarily aimed at school staff, school leaders and governors in schools, 6th forms and colleges including Academies, Free schools, student Referral Units and alternative providers.

It may also be useful for FE and community settings.

What has changed?

This document replaces previous advice to schools. It outlines, in one place, the government's approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools have to tackle bullying, and the principles that underpin the most effective anti bullying strategies in schools. It also lists further resources through which school staff can access specialist information on the specific issues that they face.

What does the law say and what do I have to do?

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

There are a number of statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour, which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular, Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 does the following

- provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among students. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy, which must be communicated to all students, school staff and parents
- gives Principal teachers the ability to ensure that students behave when they are not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff

The Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, new duties on schools and other public bodies will come into force in April 2011. The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation. The Act brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender, with which schools are already bound to comply, and it extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of

age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities, some of which they will already be doing. It will apply to school policies for tackling prejudice based bullying.

Safeguarding children and young people

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff members should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue that has contributed to a child doing the bullying.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Bullying outside school premises

Principal teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Principal teachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Principal should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the actions taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Dealing with bullying

Bullying can be physical or emotional and it can take many forms (e.g. cyberbullying). Immediate physical safety and stopping violence come first, but bullying can also be because of prejudice against

particular groups (e.g. because of special educational needs, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or transgender status, or because of caring duties).

School staff, leaders and governors are best placed to decide how best to respond to the particular issues that affect their students. There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all schools.

Successful schools have clear policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour, which are clear to parents, students and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly.

Schools should apply disciplinary measures to students who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the students may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable students. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying behaviour may need support themselves.

Schools that excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where students treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other students, an understanding of the value of education and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment – in the playground, corridors, classrooms and beyond the school gates.

Staff and older students setting an excellent example to others reinforce the knowledge and values that children are taught in lessons. Schools that achieve this are successful in preventing bullying from arising in the first place.

Successful schools also do the following

- Involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
- Involve students. All students understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- Regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology; for instance, by updating acceptable use policies for computers
- Implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable
- Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying

- Provide effective staff training. Anti Bullying policies are most effective when all members of school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems and where to seek support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their students, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) students
- Work with the wider community, such as the police and children's services, where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. Successful schools also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school
- Make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. students should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school, including cyberbullying
- Create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where students can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- Celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue

School's accountability

students will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus.

Appendix 2

Dear Parent/Carer, I am writing to seek your views on how well the school dealt with the concerns you raised. We will use this information confidentially within the school to inform our review of policy and practice. The individual details will not have any wider use unless we ask, and you give, your specific permission.

How easy was it for your child/you to report the concerns surrounding other students? (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5
(Not easy) (Very easy)

Comment if we could improve:

How satisfied are you with what we did to make your child feel safe?

1 2 3 4 5
(Not easy) (Very easy)

Comment if we could improve:

How satisfied are you with the support your child has had from the school since the concern was raised?

1 2 3 4 5
(Not easy) (Very easy)

Comment if we could improve:

Overall how satisfied are you with the way in which the school deals with has dealt with this incident?

1 2 3 4 5
(Not easy) (Very easy)

Comment if we could improve:

Thank you for your help in completing this. We will use this information to think about what we do to tackle peer issues and make the school one where pupils and parents are confident that we are honest about problems which happen, confident that we do not tolerate bullying behaviour and confident that our systems support children.

Yours sincerely

Principal