



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Last Reviewed: October 2017

This document applies to all academies and operations of the Vale Academy Trust. [www.vale-academy.org](http://www.vale-academy.org)

The following related document(s) can be found on the Trust's website:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equality Policy

Document Control			
Review period	12 Months	Next review	October 2018
Owner	Headteachers Group	Approver	Board of Directors
Category	Public	Type	Global

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## INTRODUCTION

The Vale Academy Trust (the 'Trust') has a 'duty of care' towards its C&YP with regard to bullying. This duty of care includes protecting C&YP from harm by bullying.

This policy takes full account of the Trust's legal obligations under the Education Inspections Act of 2006 to ensure that all schools within the Trust have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst C&YP. These measures are part of the Trust's behaviour policy which must be communicated by all schools to staff, C&YP and parents.

The Equality Duty (with reference the Equality Act 2010) requires that the Trust and its schools have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

And is written with reference to:

- Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2017

Further advice and guidance in addition to how to seek further help can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively

## 1.0 DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, disabilities or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Bullying can take place between C&YP, between C&YP and staff; or between staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods. It can happen in isolation or quite often in the presence of others.

**Verbal bullying** – name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments and teasing

**Physical bullying** – kicking, hitting, punching, pushing and pinching

**Emotional bullying** - producing offensive graffiti, excluding people from groups, spreading hurtful and untrue rumours, being forced to do things against own will and taking belongings or money

**Cyber bullying** – offensive text messaging and e-mailing and sending degrading images by phone or the internet

## 2.0 STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Trust and its schools believes that:

- bullying is undesirable and unacceptable
- bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found
- seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength not weakness
- all members of Trust schools will be listened to and taken seriously
- bullying prevents C&YP achieving to their full potential and affects standards of achievement and aspirations
- everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear
- all of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others
- young people should be encouraged to seek support in school if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously
- young people should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them
- we all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.
- those who exhibit bullying behaviours should be supported to understand their impact and so change their behaviours

## 3.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending school is a positive experience for all members of the school
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at school
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at school and encourage C&YP to report incidences of bullying
- To deal effectively with bullying
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to
- To help and support bullies to change their attitudes as well as their behaviour and understand why it needs to change
- To liaise with C&YP, parents and other appropriate members of the school community
- To ensure all members of the school feel responsible for combating bullying
- To ensure consistency in practice within the school and Trust

## 4.0 INTENDED OUTCOMES

- That all C&YP, staff and parents understand the anti-bullying policy
- That there are procedures within schools for reporting bullying
- That parents have a point of contact in school if they are concerned about their child
- That all staff have the necessary skills and confidence to deal with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly
- That no child or young persons' educational opportunities and achievement is disadvantaged due to the experience of bullying
- That all staff are involved in dealing effectively with, reporting, recording, monitoring and if necessary referring bullying incidents
- That there is effective communication with parents and the wider school community on the subject of bullying

- That all incidents of bullying are monitored appropriately and use is made of the information to demonstrate impact of the policy

Guidelines for how bullying may be dealt with can be found in Appendix 3

The guidelines are neither compulsory nor exhaustive but may be used as a framework by students, staff and parents to provide support; response to any incident will be tailored according to individual need.

## **5.0 RECORDING OF INCIDENTS**

Each school within the Trust should develop consistent methods of monitoring bullying incidents to help evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

## **6.0 SANCTIONS**

Each school has set procedures to follow in implementing sanctions where a bullying incident has occurred. These sanctions are applied in appropriate proportion to the event. In the event of all other avenues being exhausted, or in particularly serious cases this may lead to exclusion.

## **7.0 STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE BULLYING**

Trust schools may use a range of strategies to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and support victims and those displaying bullying behaviour including:

- Promotion of the Single Equality Policy
- Promotion of the Behaviour Policy
- Co-operative group work
- Circle of Friends
- Support Groups
- Peer mediation
- Anti-bullying box/C&YP comment box
- Peer counselling
- Promote positive use of social media
- Buddy systems
- PSHE programme.
- Assemblies
- Self-esteem support
- Restorative approaches
- Anti-bullying Week
- Training for all members of staff on anti-bullying policy and strategy

General procedures for C&YP and parents/carers for reporting bullying are found in Appendix 1

## **8.0 CYBER BULLYING**

C&YP access to the internet and mobile technology can lead to cyber bullying both in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content quickly. Cyber bullying which occurs outside school can have a significant impact in school.

The Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Whilst bullying itself is not a criminal offence, 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. In the most serious cases of cyber bullying, advice may be sought from the police by the school.

The procedures outlined in “Sexting in Schools and Colleges” UK Council for Child Internet Safety 2016 is widely recognised as providing best practice procedures for managing issues relating to “Sexting” by DSLs and Headteachers and its use is non-statutory, but recommended. There is no one definition of Sexting and the definition used by the guidance should be referred to.

## **9.0 BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL PREMISES**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. 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 centre.

## **10.0 WHERE BULLYING HAS A SEVERE IMPACT**

In some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a child or young person experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Schools should ensure they make appropriate provision for a child’s short term needs, including setting out what actions they are taking when bullying has had a serious impact on a child’s ability to learn. If the bullying leads to persistent, long lasting difficulties that cause the child or young person to have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age, then schools should consider whether the child will benefit from being assessed for SEN.

## **11.0 SUPPORTING THE VICTIM**

School staff should respond sensitively where an absence arises as a result of bullying. Schools should do all they can to ensure bullied children continue to attend school as maintaining education and progression is key. This could be via separate on site provision to afford respite for bullied pupils.

## 12.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a C&YP for help. Staff must make this clear to C&YP. Unless clearly inappropriate, C&YP will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer. Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.

An underlying principle in supporting C&YP within Trust schools is that all children are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of bullying will be taken seriously. Although the school cannot guarantee confidentiality C&YP will be informed of national and local help lines, if appropriate, where the C&YP does not wish for further action to be taken by the school.

**For further information please refer to the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which can be found on the Trust's website: <http://www.vale-academy.org/>**

## 13.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be evaluated and updated annually. The views of C&YP, parents and staff will be used to make changes and improvements to the policy on an ongoing basis. Each school will, on an annual basis, analyse the school's anti-bullying data, identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies.

## APPENDIX 1 - GENERAL PROCEDURES AND DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

### a) Role of C&YP and staff in reporting and recording a bullying incident involving C&YP

We take the view that everyone has a responsibility to report incidents of bullying or to share their concerns with a member of the school community. Trust schools follow the school guide to reporting and dealing with bullying incidents.

#### **Guidance for C&YP**

##### **If you are being bullied:**

- Remember it is not your fault
- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and, if possible, tell them to stop and tell them how you feel.

##### **After you have been bullied:**

- All bullying is wrong and you do not have to stay silent about it
- Tell an adult or somebody you trust about what has happened straight away. Adults in school have a responsibility to give you help and support around bullying
- If you are scared to tell a teacher or adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you
- Keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying

##### **When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:**

- What has happened to you
- How often it has happened
- Who was involved
- Who saw what was happening
- Where it happened
- What you have done about it already.

##### **If you experience bullying by mobile phone, text messages or e-mail:**

- Don't retaliate or reply
- Save the evidence; do not delete anything
- Make sure you tell an adult who you trust
- Contact your service provider or look at their website to see where to report incidents (ask an adult to support if you need help)
- Be careful who you give your mobile phone number or e-mail address to
- Make a note of exactly when a bullying / threatening message was sent.

**For contacts and details of where to seek help outside school please see appendix 2**

### b) Guidance for parents/carers

##### **If your child has been bullied:**

- Calmly talk with your child about his/ her experiences
- Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what happened
- Reassure your child that he/ she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur he/she should report them to an adult in school immediately

- Contact your child's class teacher/ tutor / C&YP Manager to explain the problem

**When talking with members of staff about bullying:**

- Try to stay calm and bear in mind that the staff member may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened; give dates, places and names of other children involved
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school
- Stay in touch with the school and let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

**If your child is displaying bullying behaviour towards others:**

- Talk with your child and explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Show your child how he/she can join in with other children without bullying
- Make an appointment to see your child's class/form teacher and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop him/ her bullying others
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/she is co-operative or kind to other people.

**If your child is experiencing any form of cyber bullying:**

- Ensure your child is careful whom they give their mobile phone number and e-mail address to
- Check exactly when a threatening message was sent and keep evidence of offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations. Do not delete messages
- If the bullying involves a C&YP from the school contact the school to report this.
- Contact the service provider to report the incidents
- If the cyber bullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed, you should contact the police as soon as reasonably possible.

## APPENDIX 2 – FURTHER SUPPORT

- 1) Further advice can be found through Oxfordshire Local Authority:

Jo Brown  
Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator  
Children, Education and Families Directorate,  
County Hall, 3rd Floor  
New Road,  
Oxford OX1 1ND

Tel: 01865 815639

- 2) National Anti-bullying Week  
<https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week>
- 3) <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/the-law>
- 4) <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- 5) The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

**talk to us**

You can contact ChildLine about anything. No problem is too big or too small. Whatever your worry it's better out than in. There are several different ways you can get in touch with us, which you can find out more about below.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality means not telling anyone else about what you've said.

Visit our [confidentiality page](#) for more information

**ChildLine email**

You can send ChildLine an email about anything, and we'll reply to your personal inbox.

**ChildLine email**

**Message boards**

Have you got something to say, or want to ask a question? Visit the message board to have your say.

**Message boards**

**Ask Sam**

Ask Sam whatever you want. Write a message to Sam or look at what other people have asked.

**Ask Sam**

**Call ChildLine**

You can call ChildLine at any time on 0800 1111 to speak to a counsellor. Calls are free and confidential.

**Call 0800 11 11**

**Online chat**

Chat to a ChildLine counsellor online in a 1-2-1 session any time you want. Sign up to start talking.

**1-2-1 chat**

**Contacting ChildLine**

Not sure about what contacting ChildLine is like? Watch this film about what happens when you call us.

**Contacting ChildLine FAQs**

## APPENDIX 3 – ANTI-BULLYING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF, PARENTS AND STUDENTS

This table broadly describes the stages employed in the management of friendship issues through to bullying. Friendship issues are a normal part of growing up and most children will fall out with friends during their school career as they develop and change as people; this is not uncommon and self-management is an important skill to develop. The table below is not definitive, and different strategies may be tried in one particular stage; equally, each stage is not compulsory. How this guidance is used will depend on the child and the circumstances. Formal Bullying Records must be kept for safeguarding purposes for any intervention at Stage 3 and onwards.

<p><b>Stage 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most friendship and relationship issues resolve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:1 Intervention by staff. Discussions will take place with relevant students.</li> <li>• Parents may not be informed at this stage as most situations are resolvable and self-management is an important life skill. The member of staff will make a judgement based on knowledge and experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some friendship and relationship issues extend further and need more structure to resolve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An informal Restorative Meeting with a member of staff.</li> <li>• Parents informed by phone or in person but preferably in writing that a Stage 2 Restorative Meeting has been held and the behavioural expectations made clear</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely friendship issues get to this stage, but may still be resolved this way.</li> <li>• Sustained behaviour (bullying) is now a consideration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal Restorative Meeting supported by a trained practitioner (staff trained in Restorative Practice through the OCC Anti-Bullying Team).</li> <li>• A written record sent to all parents concerned.</li> <li>• Relevant staff are informed of local actions / guidance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained behaviour is now the likely cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting with the parents of the bully(ies) to educate and support the bully to change their behaviour.</li> <li>• Clarity of sanction should a change in behaviour not be seen.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 5</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanctions implemented</li> </ul>

During the stages, any of the following approaches identified in the policy may be considered:

- Co-operative group work
- Circle of Friends
- Support Groups
- Peer Mediation
- Peer Counselling
- Buddy Systems
- Self-esteem support for the victim or the bully

A child may be requested to keep a diary of Who, What, When and How?