



ABINGDON
HOUSE SCHOOL & COLLEGE

Anti-Bullying Policy

Responsible Person: Headteacher

Last Review Date: July 2024

Next Review Date: July 2025

In all AHS Policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word “parent” imports the meaning parent, guardian, carer or any other person in whom is vested the legal duties and responsibilities of a child’s primary caregiver.

If you require a copy of this document in large print, braille or audio format, please contact AHS’s Main Office.

AHS employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure compliance is met and best practice is implemented:

Peninsula HR Online
Peninsula Business Safe (Health and Safety)
Care Check (DBS)
Educare (online CPD)

Introduction

Abingdon House School and College is owned and operated by Cavendish Education; the Proprietary Body also known as the Governing Body. Any reference to Governors means any Director of Cavendish Education.

This Policy document is one of a series of AHS Policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive formal Statement of AHS's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each and every one of its students, and of the mechanisms and procedures being put into place to achieve this. Accordingly, this Policy needs to be read alongside all of these Policies in order to get the full picture, and should be read in conjunction with the **Equality Policy**, the **Health and Safety Policy**, the **Promoting British Values Policy** and the **Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy** in particular. All of these Policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to evidence the work that the whole School is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values, our '4 Cs':

Character
Creativity
Confidence
Competence

Purpose of this Policy

Bullying can be described as being "a deliberate act done to cause distress in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical intimidation, assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single incident that casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents. Bullying is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation."

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and inclusive environment where all of our children can learn in a safe and productive environment. The school culture is one of positive relationships, empathy and respect for diversity and bullying of any sort will not be tolerated. Interpersonal skills, relationship building and conflict resolution are regular parts of our wellbeing,

Aims

AHS believes that every member of its community has the right to be safe and happy and to feel that they will be protected if they feel vulnerable.

All members of the School community must be aware that bullying is always unacceptable. The School community wishes to foster an environment where caring and supportive relationships allow individuals to flourish without fear.

Types of Bullying

There are many different types of bullying. The main types are listed below. In practice, they often overlap. Some examples of the types of behaviour which fit into each group are given below. The list is not exhaustive.

Physical

Hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings (including money).

Verbal

Name-calling, teasing, insulting, chanting and joke-telling at another's expense. We also consider that unwanted phone messages or voicemail messages from mobile phones or landline phones constitute bullying behaviour.

Written

Graffiti, writing on people's belongings and schoolwork, signs and symbols left on desks or lockers and unwanted emails and texting.

Cyber

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text/photo messages, chat, and websites.

Emotional

Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, intimidating looks.

Gestures

Unkind signs and looks, pointing and sniggering, laughing behind someone's back, turning one's back on someone, or shrugging shoulders with the intention of making someone feel left out or excluded.

Sexual Harassment / Sexual Violence / Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a person's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Any incident of sexual harassment will be dealt with in line with this policy, our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

Bullying is behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, threatened or left out. It is not the ordinary give-and-take of school life, which may include disagreements, joking and friendly teasing. Similarly, excluding someone from an activity occasionally does not constitute bullying, provided it is not part of a deliberate attempt to be unkind and has not been done in an unpleasant way.

What the School is Doing About Bullying

At Abingdon House School and College, every student has the right to learn in a safe, secure and kind environment and all members of the School community have a responsibility to ensure that this occurs. In line with our vision and ethos, dealings with regard to misbehaviour and bullying will employ a restorative approach. Concerns raised around bullying are recorded in our bullying logs.

Whistle Blowing

We are a 'telling school' where students will always be encouraged to inform staff of any incidents or behaviours that are not in line with our positive school ethos. Should bullying occur, students will know that, by telling, the situation will be dealt with promptly and effectively and that anyone who knows about any bullying is to be expected to inform staff.

While we encourage all students to report concerns directly to staff, and support them in doing so, we recognise there may be situations or barriers for some students in regularly doing this. To address this, we introduced an electronic reporting system called TootToot at AHS in September 2021 (including explicit training for students on how to use this system).

Measures to be taken when cases of bullying come to light

Students who are bullied must be assured that their concerns are being taken seriously. They will have the opportunity to discuss them with a Teacher, Therapist, or another member of staff. A multi-disciplinary approach is critical due to the range of social communication and interaction challenges most of our students have. They will be given a range of options. Once they are familiar with the possibilities, they will be encouraged to choose one of them.

They will then be given support and shown the strategies by means of which they can deal with their option effectively. In serious cases of bullying the School will conduct a formal investigation, and sanctions imposed in line with the Behavioural Policy. The School will always be alert to identifying the threshold at which bullying may become a Child Protection matter, at which point it will be formally referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will take things forward in line with the School's safeguarding procedures.

Students who use bullying behaviour will be helped to see that their actions are totally unacceptable and have serious, possibly long-term, consequences. Help and support will be ongoing and monitoring will take place. Should the behaviour not improve, disciplinary action will occur.

Where appropriate the parents of victims and of perpetrators will be informed of what has happened and invited to come to School to discuss the issue.

Preventative Measures

Many students at AHS have social communication needs, which can impact relationship building, socialisation and the reading of visual and verbal cues. To support students with

this, we run social skills classes as well as small group and individual therapy sessions. Mediation and restorative conversations and interventions take place on a regular basis, to support the learning of appropriate socialising skills and conflict mediation.

Development of the wellbeing of all members of our School community is an integral aspect of the ethos of AHS and is embedded in all aspects of our daily routine. This will involve the teaching of kindness and positive personal interactions and will, therefore, be an ongoing topic of staff and student development every year. Staff are aware of the actions which can cause distress and make someone feel that they are being bullied and that this can be addressed in many areas of the curriculum and general life of the School, including:

- The ethos and values of the School as embodied in the Behaviour Policy;
- Assemblies and form periods;
- PSHE sessions;
- Wellbeing, Social Skills, and Life Skills lessons;
- The School's pastoral structures, including one-to-one work with a staff mentor; and
- taking opportunities to reinforce the School's counter bullying message and commitment to wellbeing within all lessons.

Positive approach

AHS, as a school, wants a complete absence of bullying. While this may seem an unattainable aspiration, it is our belief that the strategies we are putting in place will go a long way towards achieving this.

- Staff will be trained in working with all students to help them gain an understanding of how their behaviour impacts others and to provide them with strategies and targets for improvement.
- Bullying will be discussed throughout the year with each class and the children will be encouraged to discuss strategies for dealing with bullying.
- Parents will be informed of interventions that are taking place with their child so that they can support the positive behaviour focus and inform the school of progress occurring outside of school
- In cases where these interventions do not result in changing the bullying behaviour, a more discipline-focused approach will need to occur. Meetings with parents, students and staff will occur and behavioural contracts agreed upon, with clear consequences set out, such as removal from play time, removal from lessons, suspensions or exclusions.
- AHS will provide training and ongoing education to staff and students about cyberbullying and its dangers and will remain vigilant over the appropriate use of social media and IT.