Manchester Communication Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

with you, for you, about you.

This document has been approved for operation within	Manchester Communication Academy
Date of last review	November 2023
Date of next review	November 2026
Review Period	3 years
Status	Approved
Person Responsible for Policy	Headteacher
Owner	Local Governing Body
Signature of Approval	*Signed copy on file*

Amendment Date:	Sections Amended:	Page Number:
3rd March 2022	Key Contact Personnel information added	Introductory page
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Equality Statement: - Under the public sector equality duty (PSED), all schools/academies must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. This means schools/academies must take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented. Greater Manchester Academies Trust regularly reviews all policies and procedures which are recommended to schools/academies to ensure compliance with education and employment legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

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Key Contact Personnel

Nominated members of leadership staff responsible for the policy: Gareth Daniel and Lorna Eyre

Designated Safeguarding Lead(s): Karen Batchelor - Area Leader: Safeguarding

Named Governor with lead responsibility: Niall Beard

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures

Statement of Intent

Manchester Communication Academy works to promote an ethos where students are respectful, resilient and responsible. This policy will draw upon these core values to illustrate how bullying can be prevented and resolved. MCA recognises that students will learn best in a safe and calm community that is free from bullying and disruption where education is the primary focus. Staff, students and parents have a responsibility to report bullying as soon as possible. They also have a responsibility to implement the preventative strategies outlined in the policy.

Rossett School is aware of the statutory responsibility to discipline students for poor behaviour outside the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers the power to discipline students for poor behaviour when they are not on school premises. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere on or off the school premises.

This policy should be used alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy as child-on-child abuse must be considered as a potential source of significant harm.

Bullying, or any kind of discriminatory behaviour is unacceptable and must be addressed promptly and effectively; it should never be considered to be a typical part of growing up.

"Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them." (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19)

MCA is committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment in which all children are free from the fear of being bullied. As a school we take bullying and its impact seriously.

Bullying of any form is not tolerated in our school, whether carried out by a child or an adult. Staff, children and parents or carers will be made aware of the school's position on bullying.

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in any form. The school has high expectations of pupil behaviour and we consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff.

Any child who is a victim of bullying will be dealt with in a sympathetic manner. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff informed, and then discussed with the headteacher. A clear account of the incident will be recorded.

All staff will be informed so that close monitoring of the victim and bully can begin. Parents of both parties will be informed.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- To work towards the elimination of bullying at MCA
- To enhance the Behaviour Policy which confirms the school expectations;
- To involve all members of the school community in countering bullying;
- To enable students, staff, parents and governors to understand what constitutes bullying and their specific responsibilities;
- To ensure that there are strategies to minimise the risk of child on child abuse and procedures;
- To enable parents to feel confident that bullying will be firmly dealt with by the school;
- To inform all members of the school community that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Enable students to achieve in a safe and healthy environment
- Promote respect for oneself and others

Legislation and statutory requirements

The Law states that an educational establishment has to have measures in place to prevent bullying.

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Keeping children safe in education 2023
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986.

DfE guidance explains that academies should publish their Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Strategy on the school's website.

This policy complies with the school's Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for,

- to communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the Senior Leadership Team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including: Governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Create an ethos where children are confident to tell an adult about bullying behaviour experienced or witnessed.

The senior leadership team are responsible for,

- Ensure that all instances of bullying are investigated, through restorative approaches, recorded and that any necessary actions are taken as a response.
- Inform parents/carers of any bullying affecting their child. This can be through telephone calls, letters and emails or at a meeting.
- Ensure that children and their families understand the difference between bullying and other behaviours.
- Provide training and guidance on anti-bullying, policy and implementation, including digital and online information.
- Build capacity in children to recognise and challenge bullying.
- Create an ethos where children are confident to tell an adult about bullying behaviour experienced or witnessed.
- Deliver preventative work on bullying to children, including the use of technology and online safety.
- Follow up promptly and effectively any allegations of bullying.
- Supporting any appropriate follow up actions or interventions as a result of bullying.
- Ensure that they promote acceptance and create an ethos which respects diversity and values difference.

Children are responsible for,

- Challenging bullying behaviour if they feel able to do so.
- Telling a trusted adult if they have any worries about bullying.
- Keeping themselves and others safe by their own actions, choices and behaviours.
- Undertaking any follow up actions related to bullying situations.
- Following the positive behaviour approaches and expectations including the use of mobile and online technology.

Parents/carers are responsible for,

- Ensuring and promoting their children's health and wellbeing.
- Encouraging and promoting safe and responsible use of mobile and online technology.
- Communicating any concerns with school and working in partnership.
- Attending any training offered by the school in relation to awareness raising around bullying policies and approaches including building resilience and online safety.

- Encouraging participation in out of school activities, particularly in support of transition points. (going to secondary school)
- Modelling and supporting the adoption of a restorative approach when supporting their children.

Definitions

Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally"

(DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017):

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against.

The school recognises child on child abuse as defined within keeping children safe in education 2023 as a potential form on bullying. The Trust classifies all of the defined bullying types as child on child on peer abuse.

Type of Bullying	Definition
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual and sexist	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching. Or comments which are sexist
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites
Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic	behaviour or language which makes a person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, whether actual or perceived, or because of their association with people who are, or perceived to be, gay, bisexual or transgender (e.g. children of same-sex couples);
Vulnerable groups	(such as looked after children, gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, children from ethnic minorities, children entitled to free school meals, children for whom English is an Additional Language
Exclusion/ostracising	deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in); Interference with possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings).

These definitions are important as there is a need to make a distinction between things that may cause a young person distress during their time in school, and bullying. A friendship that has broken down for example, and has led to insults being exchanged, though distressing, would not be considered bullying as it was neither deliberate nor repeated. There are occasions in school when a young person is quite unaware of the hurt that they have caused to a fellow pupil, as the 'victim' had kept their feelings to themselves. The definitions outlined above must be sensitively and thoughtfully applied; a hasty classification helps neither the 'victim' nor the 'perpetrator'.

Signs of bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied; adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate if a child:

- exhibits a change in attitude/feeling towards school.
- becomes frightened of coming to school, attending specific lessons or entering specific areas of the school.
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- feels ill in the morning; becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- is bullying other children or siblings.
- is frightened to say what's wrong; change their usual routine.
- becomes more withdrawn or anxious than previously.
- threatens to run away or actually runs away; threatens to/or self harm(s); begins to underperform at school; becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable; is reluctant to discuss reasons for any of the above.

Vulnerable Pupils

Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may be severely affected by it, such as those with special educational needs or disabilities. Others may be particularly vulnerable because they are going through a personal or family crisis, suffering from a health problem.

Children in care that move frequently may be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer and may lack peer support and positive social networking. Those with caring responsibilities may be vulnerable because they are socially isolated. These vulnerable young people may also be at risk of turning to social media for consolation or to get their own back by cyberbullying. There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others. The impact of bullying can be severe because of the nature and extent of the bullying or because it is combined with other factors such as those mentioned above that also affect the Social, Emotional and Mental Health of the child. Vulnerable students may be offered the use of the Hub, which is a place where students with additional needs and their friends can go at social times if they are not comfortable around other students.

Prevention

We work diligently as a school to prevent bullying. We do however acknowledge that it 'could happen here', and that bullying is a feature of most schools to some extent. We do not accept this, and will continually seek to improve our approach, learning from each case to further reduce future likelihood.

As a school we recognise that all behaviour is communication; it's important therefore to ensure

that the ethos of anti-bullying is embedded in day-to-day practice and that nurturing approaches support the building of caring relationships and consistently reinforce that bullying is never acceptable.

"A school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. The best schools develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

(Department for Education - Preventing and tackling bullying, July 2017)

Preventing bullying behaviours can be possible through a range of proactive measures. At MCA, we look for every opportunity to prevent bullying type behaviours from happening. Some of the actions the school takes to prevent bullying include:

- The issue of bullying is included in the curriculum e.g. Aspire
- The Form Time and Assembly programmes reinforce British Values and the community values of the academy: respect, responsibility and resilience.
- Anti-bullying week is dedicated to raising awareness of bullying and reminding staff and students of their responsibilities to report it.
- Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones around the school. This is partly to prevent cyber-bullying.
- Duty staff are to be vigilant and to watch and listen for any bullying type behaviours, no matter how small.
- Duty points have been carefully considered to ensure there are no spaces where bullying can take place undisturbed.
- Seating plans in lessons are carefully considered using any relevant information about the relationships between specific pupils.
- The personal development team raise awareness of issues such as racism and homophobia.
- Working with the wider community such as the police/children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent to send a strong message that bullying is unacceptable within our school.

Reporting Bullying

Students can report bullying of themselves or someone else in the following ways:

- Speaking to their Progress Leader
- Speaking to their Head of Year
- Speaking to their Director of Pastoral Care
- Speaking to the Designated (or Deputy) Safeguarding Lead
- All students can report an issue through MCA4U
- Students can speak to 'Guardian Angels' to report any issues of bullying
- Importantly, students are reminded that they can speak to **any** member of staff in school they trust
- Students can speak to their parents/carers and ask them to pass on the information to the school.

Parents/Carers can report bullying of their child or someone else's in the following ways:

- Contacting their child's Progress leader by email, telephone, meeting
- Contacting their child's Head of year
- Contacting the Director of Pastoral care
- Importantly, parents/carers are reminded that they can speak to **any** member of staff in school regarding this. Staff will pass this on to the Pastoral Team.

Tackling Bullying

MCA has clear strategies for responding to bullying incidents. These may include outcomes from the school sanction system as detailed within the school behaviour policy. The consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident. All sanctions will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably – after careful consideration of possible contributing factors such as special educational needs, disabilities or other vulnerabilities of both the victim and perpetrator.

The school will support the victim upon finding out about bullying, but will also seek to work with the perpetrator of the bullying in order prevent further incidents in the future.

The incident may also be referred to the Police if it is found to be unlawful. To conduct the investigation fully, we reserve the right to search students, access student electronic devices and confiscate where deemed appropriate. Students may need to be isolated during the investigation period. When appropriate, a restorative conversation will take place between both students and parents. Once resolved, the incident will be updated on Sims and remain on file, forming part of the student's behaviour record.

Bullying outside school premises

"Staff have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable" (Behaviour and discipline in schools, DfE, 2016).

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/city centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated utilising the procedures outlined in the policy. If the reported behaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police would always be informed. The school would always inform parents if this was the case, but does not require their consent.

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.

MCA 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.

MCA will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our behaviour policy

Climate for learning

To support our climate for learning (outlined within the Behaviour Policy) we have health lessons within our Aspire curriculum that encourage students to be safe and healthy. This includes lessons on bullying, e safety and mindfulness.

We also have a fortnightly cycle of assemblies where our academy values are shared with the weekly focus from the global citizenship calendar. Assemblies specifically on anti-bullying are planned into this by our Area Leader for Health, with a demonstration of Tootoot, the reporting platform.

Supporting pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support. This may include; working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy. This may include; parental meetings, SLT warnings, study plus, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance. This may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Supporting adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the Principal.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.
- Support from the school's counsellor or accessing the Health Assured helpline (staff).

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the Principal to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required. Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Evaluation and monitoring

This policy will be monitored by the Principal and reviewed every 3 years . As part of this review, staff, student and parent voice will be considered.

Links to other policies

- Child Safeguarding and Protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- E Safety policy

Useful websites

www.bullying.co.uk	www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
www.childline.org.uk	www.kidscape.org.uk
www.each.education	www.youngminds.org.uk
www.youngstonewall.org.uk	www.nspcc.org.uk
www.stoptextbully.com	www.beyondbullying.com
www.childnet-int.org	www.cyberbullying.org
www.chatdanger.com	www.thinkuknow.co.uk