ANTI BULLYING POLICY

2026/2027

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Date of next review	June 2027

Our School Commitment

"Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community." (DfE, 2007).

Unified Academy is fully committed to preventing and tackling bullying. Bullying is a deliberate, harmful and divisive act or set of behaviours which can have serious and far-reaching effects on those who experience it, whether 'victim' or 'perpetrator'. At Unified Academy we work proactively with students, staff and families to educate our young people about bullying, to address and rectify bullying or concerns about bullying wherever we find them, and to support all members of the school community to feel safe, valued and respected.

Our community ethos *'supporting each other achieving together'* seeks to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which all students are able to feel safe and flourish academically and socially.

We seek to work compassionately with all individuals involved and ensure that we can provide the appropriate support for all individuals so that bullying is address and safety measure implemented as the earliest possible stage. As a community it is important to us that appropriate information is supplied to all staff, volunteers, children, and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying. This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Unified Academy and will, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. We as a community are committed to eradicate any form of bullying.

Unified Academy Values

Our Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a particular type of unacceptable behaviour. It is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. We acknowledge that bullying has no time limit and can be short term or can happen over long periods of time.

Unified Academy views bullying as anti-social behaviour which is never acceptable. **No person has the right to deliberately make another feel uncomfortable or unhappy.**

Bullying can be:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence; invasive, hurtful or threatening physical contact
Verbal	Teasing, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours
Written	Letters, notes, texts, graffiti
Cyber	All areas of online life, such as email and chat room misuse Harassment, shaming, threats or persecution via social media Mobile threats by text messaging and calls Misuse of associated technology e.g. camera and video facilities, iPad, games consoles Making and/or sharing images with the intent to threaten or harm – this includes the non-consensual making/sharing of sexually explicit imagery

Bullying can happen to anyone, but can often be specifically:

- Racist – ethnicity, skin colour, language, religious or cultural practices.
- Homophobic/transphobic – discrimination based on actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Sexual – unwelcome sexual advances or remarks that causes offence, humiliation or intimidation, including pressure to send images of a sexual nature; unwanted physical contact, intimation, coercion; sexually abusive language, imagery or graffiti.
- Disablist – discrimination based on actual or perceived special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 'Difference' – discrimination based on any real or perceived difference e.g. dress, hobbies and interests, family set up, social behaviour.
- Faith-based – discrimination based on matters relating to religious ideology, belief or creed.

Bullying can also form part of, or turn into, child on child abuse. Unified Academy staff are trained to understand how to recognise and respond to both bullying and child on child abuse, and are vigilant in observing the dynamics between pupils/students and reporting any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Understanding bullying behaviour

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of bully over victim. This can be achieved by:

- Size and/or strength
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying (using email, social networking sites, texts etc.)
- The level of cognition, confidence, or emotional maturity of students
- SEND needs of pupils/students
- Hierarchy of staff

At Unified Academy we are vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of safeguarding. We do not wait to be told before raising concerns or dealing directly with the matter.

Students may not recognise, or not be able to articulate, that they are being bullied, or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying. Our staff know our students well and are able to identify those who may be at risk of being bullied. We also monitor behaviour logs to ensure we track patterns of behaviour which can cause concern. We are also alert to the dynamics within and between groups of peers and will take action if harmful imbalances of power are developing.

Bullying and keeping children safe

Unified Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We ensure that consistent and effective safeguarding procedures and policies are in place to support pupils/students and staff at school and follow the guidance of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

This anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as well as our Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer which details the specific work, both proactive and reactive, that we undertake to ensure that our pupils/students are able to learn and thrive in a safe and supportive environment. These documents can be found on our website:
https://www.unifiedacademy.org/about_us/safeguarding/

Bullying and discrimination

Unified Academy is a special school for boys aged 9-16 whose Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have identified social, emotional and mental health as their primary area of need. As such, we work closely to the guidelines laid out in the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that all of our students are treated fairly and in accordance to their individual learning needs.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Stopping bullying wherever it takes place

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, corridors, on the journey to and from school, and in online forums. It can take place during school time, out of school while on residential visits, day visits, in group activities, and between families in the local community.

At Unified Academy we consult with students using the Safeguarding and Mental Health & Well-being questionnaire to understand where and when they feel safe/unsafe, in order to ensure that there are robust and responsive processes in place.

There are safe spaces within the school [intervention rooms/classrooms/offices] where students can have quiet time and talk to an adult. These are overseen by the safeguarding and pastoral team who monitors student attendance and discusses regularly with the DSL.

Preventative Action

Unified Academy students are encouraged to think about and understand bullying through such opportunities as Student Council, e-safety sessions, assemblies, PSHE lessons, Anti-Bullying Week, additional responsibilities and school policy writing.

Our school's ethos and working philosophy means that all staff actively encourage students to have respect for themselves, each other and their environment. Behaviour which, for example, 'shows how others are feeling', or 'cares for others' is consistently acknowledged and rewarded through celebration assemblies. Students are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate.

As a school we take bullying seriously. We use a range of proactive strategies to prevent bullying. These include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular, tutor periods and PSHE classes where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying, e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year
- Whole school assemblies
- Student surveys
- Poster campaigns
- Improved supervision in potential problem areas
- Peer mentoring and Buddy Schemes
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school
- Practising skills such as listening to each other - respecting the fact that we are all different - making sure that no one is without friends - dealing with problems in a positive way - checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well
- Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying
- Putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place making sure our response to incidents of bullying considers: - the needs of the person being bullied - the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour - needs of any bystanders - our school community as a whole
- Reviewing the plan developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

Unified Academy has a 'Worries and Concerns' procedure, developed with students, to support our students in raising any complaint or concern. This can be found on our website, under the Student tab.
https://www.unifiedacademy.org/students/worries-and-concerns/

These concerns are sent straight to the DSL and DDSL who ensure that they are heard and acted upon. The Worries and Concerns procedure is regularly publicised to pupils/students and families.

Staff regularly discuss bullying, creating an atmosphere of openness and building confidence among students to discuss bullying.

Expectations around behaviour are regularly reinforced by staff, as is the school's ethos of mutual respect and tolerance.

Reporting bullying

If a student or parent has a concern they should contact the school immediately.

Safeguarding Team:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Catherine Thomas Tel: 01737 215488 email: dsl@unifiedacademy.org

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL):

Fergus Reid
Sarah Orchard
Dayna Suppiah
Taylor Nagle
Steve Waller
Josie Bulloch
Laura Hall
Jeremy Crouch
Beverley Manley

Tel: 01737 215488 email:dsl@unifiedacademy.org

Please see our Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer for further details. These can be found on the Safeguarding page of our website

https://www.unifiedacademy.org/about_us/safeguarding/

Responding to Bullying

The following disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Official warning and immediate challenge to bullying
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or certain activities
- Tutor meetings, Parental meeting, Restorative meeting if appropriate
- Timetable modification and learning focus
- Opportunities to teach and reteach about peer on peer bullying
- Opportunities to teach about all forms of bullying
- Referral to senior staff and/or external agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Police

Liaison Officer.
- Fixed term suspension
- Permanent exclusion

Where bullying is identified, our primary aim is to ensure that all students are safe. Unified Academy staff will take a twofold approach to resolving the issue: addressing the behaviour which has already taken place, and deploying strategies to change the behaviour so that bullying does not recur. This work will be completed with both sets of parents/carers' knowledge and support.

Measures to address the behaviour that has already taken place will be in line with the Behaviour Policy and Behaviour Procedures, and proportionate to the behaviour. They will always include some form of restorative approach. Depending on the situation, sanctions such as removal of privileges or exclusion may be deployed as part of the overall approach. Any exclusions will be determined in line with the Exclusions Policy.

Where criminal behaviour is suspected or confirmed to have occurred as part of the bullying incident, the Police/Safer School's Police Officer will be informed.

Unified Academy may deploy a range of strategies to help the bully or bullies understand and change their behaviour and make amends to those being bullied. Strategies may include:

- Restorative approach
- Senior Leadership Bullying Panel
- Pastoral Interventions – from our behaviour team
- Peer support systems
- Therapeutic Interventions such as, Emotional Literacy Support, Canine Assisted Learning & Drumming & Music.

Any reports of bullying behaviour by Unified Academy students outside of school will be investigated by school staff. If appropriate, action may be taken as above.

Victim Support

Unified Academy is committed to ensuring that every student who has experienced bullying feels supported, protected, and empowered. Our approach focuses on restoring a sense of safety and belonging for the victim while addressing the behaviour of those responsible.

To achieve this, we use a range of supportive strategies designed to prioritise the wellbeing of the affected student. These may include restorative approaches that give the victim a voice, involvement from the Senior Leadership Bullying Panel to ensure concerns are taken seriously and tailored pastoral interventions from our behaviour team to provide ongoing emotional support.

We also offer peer support systems to help students feel less isolated, alongside therapeutic interventions such as Emotional Literacy Support, Canine Assisted Learning, and Drumming & Music sessions. Together, these measures aim to rebuild confidence, promote healing, and ensure that every student knows they are valued and safe within our school community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Unified Academy measures progress and impact of these by utilising the following:

- Pupil/student voice – surveys, student council

- Parent/carer surveys
- Reviewing data – trends, actions, effective follow up – EDI data
- Reporting to governors, CEO monitoring, termly safeguarding audit

Communicating the policy

This policy is shared with students via a 'child friendly version' during assemblies, tutor time activities and themed days. Staff are given dedicated CPD sessions to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities around preventing and reporting bullying. Parents/carers and other stakeholders have access to this policy via our website.