



Sheffield Springs Academy
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Peer Conflict Anti-Bullying Policy

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Every person within our community is valued equally and should be treated as such, regardless of their age; gender; sexual orientation; lifestyle choices; race; religion; physical ability or disability. All children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed

1. Introduction

At Sheffield Springs Academy, learning is at the centre of everything we do. All students have the right to feel safe, valued and able to learn without fear of bullying, harassment or intimidation. We are committed to fostering a calm, purposeful and inclusive culture in which positive relationships enable every student to achieve and thrive.

This policy reflects the academy's commitment to fostering a culture of respect and pride, where all members of our community take responsibility for creating a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Bullying in any form is not tolerated at Sheffield Springs Academy. We recognise that bullying causes harm, undermines wellbeing and damages learning. We therefore take all concerns seriously, respond promptly and act proportionately to protect students and prevent further harm.

Our approach to bullying is rooted in:

- strong adult leadership and clear boundaries
- safeguarding and the protection of vulnerable pupils
- education, restoration and accountability
- partnership with parents and carers

We are a telling school. Students, staff and parents are encouraged to share concerns at the earliest opportunity so that issues can be addressed before harm escalates.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that:

- is intended to cause harm
- is repeated over time, and
- involves an imbalance of power between those involved

Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional or social, and can occur face-to-face or online.

Bullying may include:

- physical aggression, threats or intimidation
- name-calling, taunting or humiliating language
- exclusion or isolation
- spreading rumours or damaging reputations
- cyberbullying through messages, social media or online platforms
- bullying related to protected characteristics, including disability, race, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation

Peer conflict

Not all incidents of unkind behaviour constitute bullying. Peer conflict refers to disagreements or fall-outs between students of equal power and status. While peer conflict still requires adult support, it is managed differently from bullying. Staff are trained to identify the difference and respond appropriately.

This distinction is important and is referenced throughout this policy.

3. Where bullying may occur

Bullying can take place:

- on academy premises
- during travel to and from school
- during lessons, social times or unstructured periods
- online or off-site where behaviour impacts the academy community

Concerns occurring outside school will be addressed where they affect students' safety, wellbeing or learning.

4. Online bullying (cyberbullying)

Online bullying, also known as cyberbullying, refers to bullying behaviour that takes place through digital technology, including social media platforms, messaging apps, online gaming, email or websites. Online bullying is treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face bullying due to its potential impact on students' wellbeing and learning.

Cyberbullying may include abusive messages, intimidation, harassment, exclusion, sharing harmful content or targeting individuals based on personal or protected characteristics.

Students who experience online bullying are encouraged to:

- tell a trusted adult at the earliest opportunity
- avoid responding or retaliating
- save evidence such as screenshots, messages or usernames
- block and report abusive content where appropriate

Concerns can be reported through the same routes as all bullying concerns, including Form Tutors, Pastoral Heads of Year, the Wellbeing Hub, student ambassadors or via the academy's anonymous post-box system.

Academy response

All reports of online bullying are addressed through the same reporting, investigation and response process outlined in this policy. This includes parental communication, appropriate sanctions, restorative approaches and ongoing monitoring to prevent recurrence.

Where online bullying occurs outside the academy, the behaviour will be addressed where it impacts the safety, wellbeing or learning of students within the academy community.

Where online bullying involves serious threats, harassment, hate-related behaviour or other conduct that may constitute a criminal offence, the academy will seek advice from the police and/or other appropriate agencies. Any such action will be taken in line with safeguarding procedures and in consultation with senior leaders.

Safeguarding

Online bullying may be escalated as a safeguarding concern where there is evidence of significant harm, intimidation, coercion or serious distress. In such cases, concerns will be referred to the DSL team and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Through education and partnership with parents and carers, the academy promotes responsible online behaviour and supports students to use technology safely and respectfully.

5. Prevention

We believe that prevention is the most effective way to reduce bullying. At Sheffield Springs Academy, prevention is achieved through:

- a strong behaviour culture underpinned by clear expectations
- positive staff-student relationships
- consistent use of the Behaviour and Conduct Policy
- high-quality PSHE and safeguarding education
- assemblies and curriculum opportunities that promote respect and tolerance
- visible adult supervision and proactive pastoral care
- student leadership roles, including ambassadors and peer support
- a culture where bystanders are encouraged to act and report concerns

All staff model respectful relationships and challenge bullying language or behaviour whenever it occurs.

6. Responding to bullying concerns

When bullying is reported or suspected, Sheffield Springs Academy follows a clear and consistent process to ensure concerns are addressed promptly, fairly and effectively.

Reporting concerns

Bullying concerns may be reported by students, parents or staff by:

- speaking to any trusted member of staff
- informing a Form Tutor or Pastoral Head of Year
- accessing the wellbeing hub
- reporting through student ambassadors
- using the academy's anonymous post-box system located outside the Principal's office

Anonymous reports are accepted and acted upon. While anonymity may limit the depth of investigation, it will never prevent staff from responding to concerns.

All staff have a responsibility to:

- take all concerns seriously
- pass concerns promptly to the Pastoral Head of Year or DDSL
- ensure concerns are recorded appropriately in line with academy systems

Staff should report concerns and must not conduct independent investigations unless directed to do so.

Investigation

All reported concerns are investigated promptly, sensitively and proportionately. The academy will:

- gather information from all relevant parties
- review patterns, frequency and any power imbalance
- distinguish clearly between peer conflict and bullying
- determine whether safeguarding thresholds are met
- record actions and outcomes accurately

Parents or carers will be informed at the earliest appropriate opportunity. The Pastoral Head of Year or DDSL will act as the main point of contact.

Action and outcomes

Where bullying is confirmed, the academy will:

- apply sanctions in line with the Behaviour and Conduct Policy

- implement restorative approaches to address harm and rebuild relationships
- put appropriate pastoral or behavioural support in place
- monitor the situation to ensure the behaviour does not recur

Outcomes are proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour. Safeguarding concerns may alter or escalate responses. This may include referral to the police or other external agencies where behaviour meets a safeguarding or criminal threshold.

Bullying that occurs outside the academy will be addressed where it impacts the safety, wellbeing or learning of students within the academy community.

7. Support for students

Students who experience bullying

Support may include:

- regular check-ins with a trusted adult
- adjustments to routines or supports
- wellbeing interventions or mentoring
- referral to internal or external services where appropriate

Students are reassured that bullying is not their fault and that they will be supported.

Students who engage in bullying behaviour

Where bullying is identified, students will:

- be held accountable for their behaviour
- receive appropriate sanctions
- engage in restorative work to understand and repair harm
- receive pastoral or behavioural support where needed

We recognise that bullying behaviour can signal unmet needs and address these alongside consequences.

8. Consequences

Sanctions are applied in line with the Behaviour and Conduct Policy and reflect the seriousness of the behaviour.

Where bullying is confirmed, outcomes will be applied as follows:

- **First confirmed incident:** Off-site direction (OSD) as a time-limited supportive intervention, providing structured reflection, continued education and targeted support for a period of up to 3 days.
- **Second confirmed incident:** Fixed-term suspension for 5 days.
- **Third confirmed incident:** Managed move to another mainstream school for a time-limited period of up to 12 weeks, used as a supportive, planned intervention to enable sustained improvement, reduce risk, and support a successful longer-term placement.
- **Fourth confirmed incident:** Permanent exclusion.

Sanctions are used alongside restorative work and pastoral support. Each incident is considered on its own merits, and safeguarding concerns may alter outcomes.

The consequence steps outlined above do not apply where an incident meets a higher threshold of seriousness. Following investigation, some incidents may result in an immediate fixed-term suspension or permanent exclusion without progression through the staged consequences, particularly where the behaviour poses a serious risk to the safety, wellbeing or learning of others.

9. Safeguarding

Bullying may become a safeguarding concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

In such cases:

- concerns are escalated to the DSL team
- safeguarding procedures are followed
- external agencies may be involved where necessary

This policy should be read alongside the Sheffield Springs Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. Roles and responsibilities

- **Principal:** overall responsibility for ensuring a safe learning environment
- **Senior Vice Principal:** strategic oversight of behaviour culture
- **Assistant Headteacher – DSL:** safeguarding leadership
- **Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour and Conduct:** implementation of this policy
- **DDSL and Safeguarding Manager:** monitoring, escalation and liaison
- **Pastoral Heads of Year:** investigation, parental communication and monitoring
- **Behaviour Manager:** sanctions and reintegration support
- **SENCO:** support for students with additional needs
- **Wellbeing Officer:** pastoral intervention and mentoring
- **Form Tutors:** daily vigilance and first-point support
- **Governing Body:** monitoring effectiveness and policy review

11. Working with parents and carers

We value partnership with parents and carers and encourage early communication. Parents should contact the academy if they have concerns about bullying so that we can work together to support their child.

Parents will be kept informed throughout investigations and outcomes wherever appropriate.

12. Monitoring & review, policy into practice

The academy will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy to ensure it is applied consistently and effectively. Bullying data, themes and patterns will be reviewed and communicated to the linked governor with responsibility for behaviour and/ or safeguarding at least on a half-termly basis.

Any trends or areas for development identified through monitoring will inform the academy's action planning, staff training and curriculum provision, ensuring continuous improvement in practice and support for students

Supporting Organisations and Guidance

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBT

- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk
- Fruitbowl: www.sheffieldfruitbowl.org.uk

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-codeof-practice-0-to-25>

Racism and Hate

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srrc.org/educational