



GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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1. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Gothic Mede Academy is a values-based lower school for children aged 3 to 9 years old. Our learning, interactions and strengths are rooted in our four school values - Compassion, Pride, Respect and Responsibility.

We are an ambitious school where we take pride in all that we do, as reflected in our motto - Pride in ourselves, pride in our school, pride in our community. The staff, governors and whole school community aim to provide a safe, happy and nurturing environment.

Gothic Mede Academy aims to provide a secure and caring community where everyone can learn their own self-worth in an atmosphere of tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation. We intend the school to be a happy and enjoyable place to learn and to work, which will provide the opportunity for every child and adult to fulfil their potential in an attractive, well-resourced and stimulating environment.

In line with these values:

- All bullying, of any sort, is unacceptable.
- Pupils who experience bullying will be supported.
- We recognise the effects that bullying can have on pupils' feelings of worth and on their school work, and the school community will actively promote an anti-bullying environment.

This policy outlines what Gothic Mede Academy will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. This policy has been adopted with the involvement of the whole school community. Gothic Mede Academy is committed to a whole school anti-bullying culture, where bullying of adults or children is not tolerated in any form.

This policy sets out Gothic Mede Academy's intention to:

- To provide a learning environment free from any threat or fear, which is conducive to the achievement of individual aspirations.
- To reduce and to eradicate, wherever possible, instances in which pupils are subject to any form of bullying.
- To respond effectively to all instances of bullying that are reported to us.
- To establish a means of dealing with bullying, and of providing support to pupils who have been bullied.
- To provide support for pupils who are accused of bullying, who may be experiencing problems of their own.
- To ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the policy and that they fulfil their obligations to it.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The policy has been developed in consultation with the following groups; local governing body, staff members, pupils and parents.

3. LEGISLATION, GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Other GMA policies the Anti-Bullying Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Positive Relationships policy
- Safeguarding Policy

- Child on child abuse policy
- Whistleblowing (Confidential reporting) policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Online Safety (Including Acceptable Use) Policy

This policy has been developed in response to:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- The Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- 'Preventing and tackling bullying.' Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies" DfE (July 2017)
- OFSTED education inspection framework 2021
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- The most recent anti-bullying guidance.

4. 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."

*Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies
DfE (July 2017)*

There are three key elements to this definition:

- hurtful
- repetition
- intentional

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Some forms of bullying are attacks not only on the individual, but also on the group to which he or she may belong. While we will address all forms of bullying within school, if the bullying involves the below elements then additional measures to address it may be considered.

- Racial harassment and racist bullying
- Sexual bullying
- The use of homophobic language

- Bullying of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities.

4.1. Context

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

4.2. Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk, however, we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include children who:

- have experience of abuse within their family
- are living with domestic violence
- are young people in care
- are children who go missing
- are children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities)
- are children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

5. WHOLE SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING APPROACH

A whole school approach to anti-bullying is cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed with school leadership to reduce bullying and respond to it appropriately.

There is evidence that a 'whole school approach' (Cambridge Education, 2005) where the whole school community, including the pupils, teachers, support staff; parents and board of governors, are involved in confronting the issue of bullying is the most effective approach to tackling bullying in school.

Gothic Mede Academy's Positive Relationships Policy explains how we promote positive behaviour in school to create an environment where pupils behave well; where pupils take responsibility for each other's emotional and social well-being; and where they include and support each other.

Through the school's wider curriculum and specifically PSHE we will; raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy, increase understanding for victims and help build an anti-bullying ethos, and teach pupils how to build and manage healthy relationships with others.

We will promote appropriate behaviour through direct teaching, and by creating an emotionally and socially safe environment where these skills are learned and practised. Our aim is to create a climate where all members of our community treat each other with respect and everyone is able to identify bullying behaviour and recognise it as unacceptable.

We will promote an anti-bullying culture through:

- An annual dedicated anti-bullying week.
- Use circle time, assemblies, role- plays and stories to show what pupils can do to show what pupils can do to prevent bullying, and to create an anti-bullying climate in school.
- Displaying the school Anti-Bullying Charter around the school and in classrooms to remind pupils of their rights and responsibilities.
- We will publish our anti-bullying policy on the school website.
- Regularly looking at behaviour records to look for any patterns of behaviour for an individual child which may indicate bullying is taking place.

- We will ask pupils whether they feel safe in school and we will supervise, and try to eliminate any unsafe areas which they report to us.
- Including questions on feeling safe and bullying in our annual pupil questionnaires.
- We will provide regular training/reminders for teachers and non-teaching staff on spotting the signs of bullying and how to respond to it.
- Responding to any concerns that parents may have about their child being bullied.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1. Prevention

At GMA we recognise the importance of preventing bullying and endeavour to take a proactive approach to ensuring all members of our community are safe from abuse.

As part of our on-going commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils we at GMA engage in a range of preventative work to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying behaviour. This preventative work includes:

- All GMA staff are aware of the high importance to prevent bullying and proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict to develop strategies to prevent bullying happening in the first place.
- We ensure that pupils understand the school's approach to anti-bullying and that they are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Ensuring all pupils know how to report bullying and feel safe to do so
- Proactively seeking to celebrate success to create a positive value based culture
- Raising staff awareness for lesson planning, promoting an anti-bullying culture across the taught curriculum and including differences such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality.
- Issuing confidential emails to alert staff to pupils in difficulty and potential problem relationships between pupils.
- Logging behaviour incidents on CPOMS and reviewing these half termly to pick up any developing patterns of behaviour or concerns.
- Supporting our vulnerable pupils and ensuring staff working with pupils are aware of any needs or traits that might make a child more susceptible to bullying as either the victim or perpetrator.
- Promoting respect, inclusion and healthy relationships through the delivery of PSHE, activities/assemblies as well as through nurture groups.
- Promoting e-safety throughout the Academy (please see our Online Safety Policy) and inviting the police in regularly to do training with parents.
- Making sure that GMA follows all Equal Opportunities guidance by being committed to equal opportunities and seeking to support all pupils regardless of age, gender, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or background.
- Providing nurture and wellbeing support to build confidence and self-esteem and help pupils gain mechanisms to deal with any "difficult" situations
- SLT regularly reviewing bullying locations around school and using this to inform policy and strategy.

6.2. Responding to alleged incidents

All reports of bullying will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved

- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery?
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- The duration of the alleged behaviour

It is important to deal with a situation of bullying immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

6.3. The immediate response to a report

- The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe
- All staff will be trained to manage any report of bullying
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the SLT and parents). Staff will, however, only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it
- A written report will be made as soon after the discussion as possible recording the facts as presented by the child.
- Assess the needs of the victim and child alleged to have caused harm
- The Head of School will be informed as soon as possible and consider whether referrals to the DSL, the police or social care is necessary and ensure this is completed if it is
- A member SLT will consider whether a risk assessment is necessary and ensure this is completed if it is needed

6.4. When recording allegations of bullying it is essential that:

- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection recording form
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child.
- Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

6.5. Gather the Facts

Speak to all the children involved separately and gain a statement of facts from them. Use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the children to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

6.6. Consider the Intent

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a child to be able to harm another?

6.7. Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any child to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Consider how the response needs to be framed in the context of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Child on Child Abuse Policy and Positive Relationships Policy.

6.8. Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible in a confidential manner. Parents of both the victim and alleged perpetrator should be informed. Staff should be sensitive to the fact that the nature of the incident(s) and the emotional or physical harm their child may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

6.9. Points to consider:

- What is the age of the children involved?
- Is there any age difference between those involved?
- Where did the incident or incidents take place?
- Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?
- What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?
- Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example (regular and repetitive)? Is the version of one young person different from another, and if so, why?
- What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred? Do the young people know/understand what they are doing?
- Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about? Has that prompted the behaviour?
- Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived?
- Does the young person have an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

6.10. Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered, has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

6.11. Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of bullying, a teacher or member of SLT will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- The child alleged to have caused harm; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded electronically and be kept under review.

It's equally important that schools and colleges think about children's safety outside of the school hours and any extra-familial risks. Things to consider include:

- Are they aware of any unsafe spaces in their local area?
- Do the children attend the same clubs or activities outside of school?
- Do the children attend any extra-curricular activities at school led by external agencies?

6.12. Follow up actions

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case, the school will ensure that the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) do not interact with each other wherever possible and where this cannot be managed (i.e. within a classroom) the children will be sat away from each other and will be supervised at all times by a member of staff.

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the child alleged to have caused harm.

6.13. Options to manage the report

6.13.1. Manage internally

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as suspension or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

The consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident. All sanctions will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

As bullying is defined as hurtful, repeated and intentional, sanctions for incidents of bullying will be generally be more severe than most other one-off incidents of poor behaviour. These will align with the range of consequences in our behaviour and discipline policy but could include suspensions in the most extreme of circumstances.

GMA is aware of supporting both the victim and the perpetrator. This may be through solution focused short term therapy, 1:1 work or mediation, referral to outside agencies if required etc. Specific groups or organisations may be drawn on for expertise/help with certain forms of bullying.

6.13.2. Reporting to the Police

Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Leaders will follow the guidance issued to schools and colleges by the National Police Chiefs' Council on when to report an alleged crime to the police (linked below).

[When to call the police guidance for schools and colleges](#)

Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the child alleged to have caused harm is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare approach, rather than a criminal justice approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the child alleged to have caused harm and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the child alleged to have caused harm, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

7. SUPPORT

7.1. Support for Children affected by bullying

What support they require depends on the individual child and the experience that they have had. Staff will discuss options of support with the child and their parents and a decision based on their wishes and feelings will be made. It may be that they wish to engage in pastoral support within school. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this child continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

The child(ren) may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other children, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group, for example a speaker on online bullying. It may be that through the continued curriculum of Relationship and Sex Education (from 2020), PSHE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed more frequently.

If the child feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support. All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

7.2. Support for the child who has displayed bullying behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the child is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Specific support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the child may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the child has been met, it is important that the child receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually, by the Senior Leadership Team in partnership with all stakeholders, to assess its effectiveness.

Staff will monitor behaviour in their class half termly using records from CPOMS and submit a report to SLT highlighting any patterns of behaviour or concerns.

Pupil interviews and questionnaires take place on a yearly basis and the results are discussed by SLT for new strategies to be put into place if required.

GMA will seek to monitor and evaluate both of its preventative work, whole school approach and procedures for managing allegations and incidents of bullying in partnership with the Governing Body and the Student Council. .

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of School

The Head of School has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, and outside agencies.

Staff Members

- All members of staff are responsible for being vigilant and recording and reporting any incidences of bullying.
- All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that they act in accordance with this policy and all other school policies.

Governors

- GMA Governors support the Head of School in all attempts to prevent and eliminate bullying.
- The governing body monitors the incidence of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the academy policy regularly. The governors require the Head of School to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of academy anti-bullying strategies.
- Any concerns about how an incident of alleged bullying is managed by the school can be addressed using the school's complaints policy. This includes the involvement of the governing body after all steps have been taken up to and including consulting the Head of School.

Parents/Carers

- Parents/Carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact the school immediately.
- Parents/Carers have a responsibility to support the academy's anti-bullying policy and strategies issued and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the academy community.

Pupils

The school council has had the opportunity to contribute to the drafting of the current policy. They were keen for the issue of bullying to be addressed regularly throughout the year. They appreciated the work that has been done throughout the school to promote and support the

emotional wellbeing of pupils using 'Making Me (Kipsy)' and in Key Stage 2 developing resilience. However, this should not diminish the importance of raising awareness of, and tackling, bullying. At the same time, they recognise the responsibility of pupils to:

- Live the school's core values of respect, responsibility, pride and compassion.
- Take full responsibility for their own actions.
- Report all incidents of bullying and suspected incidents that victims may be afraid to report.
- Support each other and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

10. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors and published on the academies websites. Copies are also available upon request from the academy office. This policy will be reviewed every year or as required.