

THE ASTLEY COOPER SCHOOL



ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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**Headteacher: Mr S Orsborne
St Agnells Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7HL**

Tel: (01442) 394141

E-mail admin@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

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1. Aims

As an inclusive school which aims to provide opportunities for students of all abilities, it is crucial to provide a learning environment and community which enables each student to feel happy, safe and valued so that they can enjoy learning and achieve to their full potential. Bullying is a whole school issue which requires a consistent approach from all stakeholders. Preventative action is also highly important if bullying is to be tackled effectively.

At The Astley Cooper School we aim to:

Create a positive and safe learning environment for all students so they can achieve to their potential.

Ensure that all staff can identify and respond to bullying behaviour consistently across the school.

Educate and support students in making decisions which do not deliberately harm or upset others and prevent them from feeling happy and safe in school.

Raise awareness among students and parents about the signs of bullying behaviour so they know what action to take if a student is being bullied.

What is bullying?

- Bullying is behaviour which either intends to, or deliberately causes, significant distress.
- Behaviour which is repeated, or which has a significantly negative impact on the target.

It can take many forms such as:

- Verbal – name calling, insulting others, pushing, making offensive remarks, racist or homophobic remarks, making threats.
- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking others' belongings
- Emotional – deliberately excluding others, spreading nasty stories or rumours about someone. Intimidation and harassment.
- Written – passing hurtful notes about others, offensive and threatening graffiti or other written material.
- Sexual – unwanted and inappropriate physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Cyber – sending inappropriate and cruel text or video messages, emails or instant messages which are designed to cause harm or offence; encouraging others to participate in spreading harmful text messages, instant messages and emails; setting up websites or contributing to content on social networking sites which aim to embarrass, upset or hurt individuals or groups of individuals; manipulating photographs and images to harm another person; harassing another student with repeated and offensive phone calls; using social networking sites to abuse another students' personal information or posts without the owner's consent.

Bullying is not:

- A one-off comment said in anger in which there is no evident power imbalance between the students involved.

- An argument between two students where both have been guilty of similarly offensive or threatening remarks.
- A physical altercation between two students in which both have been willing participants
- Isolated or one-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a one-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging.

Such incidents may well be dealt with according to the relevant sections of the school's behaviour policy but not the anti-bullying policy.

The following groups are particularly vulnerable to bullying and all stakeholders should pay particular attention to this:

- LGBT students
- Disabled students
- Students belonging to religious groups
- Ethnic minority students
- Travellers
- Students with special educational needs or G&T students
- Students who are overweight, looked after children, students from socially and economically deprived backgrounds, young carers.

2. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Student does not want to come to school, pretending to be ill, attendance starts to decrease

- Lack of eye contact from student
- Student starts to withdraw from normal activities in school
- Minimising windows on their computer screen. This could be an indication that malicious emails or messages have been received
- Personality changes e.g becoming less sociable, lack of confidence, tearful, irritable, hypersensitivity, mood swings, loss of humour
- Changes to eating habits
- Withdrawing from social situations – not spending time with friends, alone at break and lunchtimes.
- Doesn't answer their phone or reply to texts when they normally would
- Negative outlook
- Poor concentration, panic attacks, forgetfulness, fatigue, stress, Low self-confidence and self-esteem. Lack of self-worth.
- Self-harming and threatening suicide
- Changing their normal route to and from school
- Increasing reliance on alcohol and drugs

3. Preventative Action

At The Astley Cooper School, every member of the school community has a role to play in preventing bullying and creating a safe and positive learning environment for all students.

Action will be taken to prevent bullying in the following ways:

- Promoting and maintaining an ethos that encourages respect for others, regardless of each other's differences.

- Educating students on how to recognise 'bullying behaviour', helping them to understand the effects of 'bullying behaviour' and modelling appropriate and respectful behaviour through PSHE, tutor time, the mentoring system and assemblies. Make students aware of how to report bullying.
- Training staff on how to identify, deal with, and respond to bullying. This should be regularly updated in line with changes to the policy.
- Duty team leaders will ensure appropriate and effective supervision of areas of the school which are vulnerable to bullying.
- Ensuring that students adhere to school policy on mobile phones in lessons.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and know how to respond if an incident of bullying occurs.
- Teachers should arrive promptly to lessons to prevent any incidents of bullying occurring when they are not there.
- Raising awareness of anti-bullying campaigns through participation in Anti-Bullying Week and rewarding students for positive behaviour.
- Utilising mentors where appropriate.
- Communicating with appropriate members of staff e.g form tutors, progress leaders, counsellors etc.
- Having clear procedures for responding to bullying. These should be regularly evaluated.
- Promoting the positive and safe use of technology and e-safety

4. Sanctions and support for students involved in bullying

The response and sanctions put in place for aggressors will depend on the severity of the incident, the length of time for which it has been occurring, and the impact on the victim. A range of sanctions may be applied.

Appropriate support/sanctions for the victims and aggressors may include:

- Restorative justice
- Monitoring report
- Behaviour contract
- Monitoring booklet
- Mentoring
- Counselling
- PSP
- Isolation/Suspension/ Permanent exclusion
- Referrals to external agencies .

Engaging with parents and carers

We believe it is important for our school to work with parents/carers to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the student being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved. Some parents may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help.

We will:

- Make sure that key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers.
- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Particularly during a lengthy investigation, or when there is a repetition of bullying, a target's parents may feel very anxious. It is very important that the investigator and the parents keep in contact but parents must understand that form tutors, Heads of Year and Senior Staff do have other demands on their time. We will always endeavour to ring parents on the same day that the incident occurred; however, phone calls may not always be able to be made as soon or as frequently as the parent would ideally like.

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. Astley Cooper school 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.

The Astley Cooper school will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying policy

5. Useful websites and resources

Anti-Bullying Alliance:

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Cybermentors:

<http://www.cybermentors.org.uk/>

Chat Danger: Guidance on how to stay safe on the internet:

<http://www.chatdanger.com/>

Beat Bullying:

<http://www.beatbullying.org/>

Childnet:

<http://www.childnet.com/default.aspx>

Kidscape:

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Dealing with Bullying: Advice for Parents and Carers

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

- Student does not want to come to school, pretending to be ill, attendance starts to decrease.
- Falling behind on school work.
- Lack of eye contact
- Student starts to withdraw from normal activities in school
- Minimising windows on their computer screen. This could be an indication that malicious emails or messages have been received.
- Your child doesn't want you to know who they have been on the phone to or what they have been doing on the internet.
- Your child talks about wanting to change their phone number.
- Not wanting to use the computer anymore.
- Personality changes e.g becoming less sociable, lack of confidence, tearful, irritable, hypersensitivity, mood swings, loss of humour
- Changes to eating habits
- Withdrawing from social situations – not spending time with friends.
- Doesn't answer their phone or reply to texts when they normally would
- Negative outlook
- Poor concentration, panic attacks, forgetfulness, fatigue, stress
- Low self-confidence and self-esteem. Lack of self-worth.
- Self-harming and threatening suicide
- Changing their normal route to and from school
- Increasing reliance on alcohol and drugs

Supporting your child - General Advice

- Talk to your child without getting upset. Clarify with them what they have said to you so you show that you have understood what they have said.
- Reassure them that being bullied is not their fault.
- Never tell your child to hit others or shout names back as this can make the situation worse.
- Don't dismiss what they have said: it has probably taken them a long time to build up the courage to talk about the problem.
- Contact us at school so we can investigate the problem.
- Keep any evidence and do not reply.










Supporting your child - Cyberbullying

- Talk to your child about how they use their phone and the internet.
- Talk to them if they seem distressed after using their phone or the internet.
- Make use of safety features online. Most social networking sites have a facility for reporting abuse.
- Do not delete any evidence. If your child has been harassed with texts and emails then save the evidence and DON'T REPLY.
- Encourage your child to write down what has happened and when it occurred.
- As a last resort, the network provider can change your child's mobile number.
- Contact us at school so we can investigate the problem.

If you suspect your child might be a bully:

- Discuss their behaviour with them and ask them to consider how their actions might be making others feel and how they would feel if this was happening to them or someone they care about.
- Try to find out if something has happened which has caused them to start bullying someone else.
- Make them aware of how serious the situation is. The school and the police could become involved if it does not stop.
- Ask them to stop the bullying behaviour and encourage them to try to make amends.
- Monitor their online activity and mobile phone usage. Move their computer into a room where you can see what they are doing. Take away their internet access and mobile phone if you suspect that they are using these to hurt others.
- Contact us at school if support is needed. We can help to investigate the problem.

Advice for Parents and Carers: How Can Technology Be Used and Misused?

Technology:	Great for:	Examples of misuse:
 <p>Mobile phones</p>	<p>Keeping in touch by voice or text, taking and sending pictures and film, listening to music, playing games, going online and sending emails. Useful in emergency situations and for allowing children a greater sense of independence.</p>	<p>Sending nasty calls or text messages, including threats, intimidation, harassment. Taking and sharing humiliating images. Videoing other people being harassed and sending these to other phones or internet sites.</p>
 <p>Instant Messenger (IM)</p>	<p>Text or voice chatting live with friends online. A quick and effective way of keeping in touch even while working on other things.</p>	<p>Sending nasty messages or content. Using someone else's account to forward rude or mean messages via their contacts list.</p>
 <p>Chatrooms and message boards</p>	<p>Groups of people around the world can text or voice chat live about common interests. For young people, this can be an easy way to meet new people and explore issues which they are too shy to talk about in person.</p>	<p>Sending nasty or threatening anonymous messages. Groups of people deciding to pick on or ignore individuals. Making friends under false pretences – people pretending to be someone they're not in order to get personal information that they can misuse in a range of ways – e.g. by spreading secrets or blackmailing.</p>
 <p>Email</p>	<p>Sending electronic letters, pictures and other files quickly and cheaply anywhere in the world.</p>	<p>Sending nasty or threatening messages. Forwarding unsuitable content including images and video clips, or sending computer viruses. Accessing someone else's account, e.g. to forward personal emails or delete emails.</p>
 <p>Webcams</p>	<p>Taking pictures or recording messages. Being able to see and talk to someone live on your computer screen. Bringing far-off places to life or video conferencing.</p>	<p>Making and sending inappropriate content. Persuading or threatening young people to act in inappropriate ways. Using inappropriate recordings to manipulate young people.</p>
 <p>Social network sites</p>	<p>Socialising with your friends and making new ones within online communities. Allowing young people to be creative online, even publishing online music. Personalising homepages and profiles, creating and uploading content.</p>	<p>Posting nasty comments, humiliating images / video. Accessing another person's account details and sending unpleasant messages, deleting information or making private information public. Groups of people picking on individuals by excluding them. Creating fake profiles to pretend to be someone else, e.g. to bully, harass or get the person into trouble.</p>
 <p>Video hosting sites</p>	<p>Accessing useful educational, entertaining and original creative video content and uploading your own.</p>	<p>Posting embarrassing, humiliating film of someone.</p>
 <p>Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)</p>	<p>School site, usually available from home and school, set up for tracking and recording student assignments, tests and activities, with message boards, chat and IM.</p>	<p>Posting inappropriate messages or images. Hacking into someone else's account to post inappropriate comments or delete schoolwork.</p>
 <p>Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds</p>	<p>Live text or voice chat during online gaming between players across the world, or on handheld consoles with people in the same local area.</p> <p>Virtual worlds let users design their own avatars – a figure that represent them in the virtual world.</p>	<p>Name-calling, making abusive / derogatory remarks. Players may pick on weaker or less experienced users, repeatedly killing their characters.</p> <p>Forwarding unwanted messages to other devices in the immediate vicinity.</p>

Dealing with Bullying: Advice for Students

Information on this page reproduced courtesy of Childnet International, 'Cyberbullying: A whole school community issue' for the DCSF.

Cyberbully

- 1: Always respect others – be careful what you say online and what images you send.
- 2: Think before you send – whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.
- 3: Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself. Only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.
- 4: Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- 5: Don't retaliate or reply!
- 6: Save the evidence – learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
- 7: Make sure you tell:
 - an adult you trust, or call a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 1111 in confidence;
 - the provider of the service; check the service provider's website to see where to report incidents;
 - your school – your teacher or the anti-bullying coordinator can help you.

Finally, don't just stand there – if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

What should I do if I experience bullying at

- 1 Report it to a teacher you trust
Tutor or Head of year. If occurs in a lesson then please tell the subject teacher.
- 2 Keep a record of anything which has happened
- 3 Keep any evidence
and do not reply to nasty or malicious texts and messages

Keep evidence of cyberbullying by saving messages and MSN conversations.

Don't reply Never retaliate or reply if you've been sent a nasty message. Block the bully and report it to an adult you can trust.

Report it Most websites and mobile phone operators have a place where you can report abuse.

Always respect others Be careful what you say and what you send. Messages and images can be made public and could stay online forever.

Protect your online accounts and your mobile phone with a password – don't share it with anyone!

Tell someone
• tell a teacher or an adult you can trust
• call ChildLine on 0800 1111 or go to www.cybermentors.org.uk

See it Get help Stop it

Chatrooms, individual website owners / forums, message board hosts:

It is good practice for chat providers to have a clear and prominent reporting mechanism to enable the user to contact the service provider. Users that abuse the service can have their account deleted. Some services may be moderated, and the moderators will warn users posting abusive comments or take down content that breaks their terms of use.