Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2025

Signed (Chair of Trustees):	
Date:	September 2025
Date of Review:	September 2026

Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. This document is also available in other formats e.g. e-mail and enlarged print version, on request to the School Offices and is displayed on the schools' websites.

Introduction

Bullying is action taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting another child, either physically or emotionally.

Aims and Objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a Trust ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. The Trust aims to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. This policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

We aim to make all those connected with the Trust aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our schools.

The Role of Governors

The Local Governing Board (LGB) supports the Headteacher/ Head of School in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our schools. This policy statement makes it very clear that the Trust does not allow bullying to take place in our schools, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The LGB monitors the incidents of bullying that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The LGB requires the Headteacher/ Head of School to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the LGB on request about the effectiveness of schools anti-bullying strategies.

The LGB responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the LGB notifies the Headteacher/ Head of School and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case and to report back to a representative of the LGB.

The role of the Headteacher/ Head of School

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher/ Head of School to implement the anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headteacher/ Head of School reports to the LGB about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Headteacher/ Head of School ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour any of the schools within the Trust. The Headteacher/ Head of School draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs the Headteacher/ Head of School may decide to use assembly as a forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong and why there would be punishments.

The Headteacher/ Head of School ensures that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying. The Headteacher/ Head of School sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

The Role of the Teacher

Teachers in our schools take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class and that they are aware of in the school.

If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Headteacher/ Head of School, the teacher informs the child's parents.

If teachers become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, they are dealt with immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. Teachers spend time talking to the child who has bullied, explain why the action of the child was wrong, and endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, the Headteacher/ Head of School is informed and the Special educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The child's parents are invited into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Headteacher/ Head of School may contact external support agencies such as social services.

Teachers routinely attend training, which enables them to become equipped to deal with incidents of bullying and behaviour management. Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

The Role of Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the Trust's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher/ Head of School, who reports to the LGB about the effectiveness of the policy on request.

This anti-bullying policy is the responsibility of the Local Governing Board and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the Trust's behaviour books and by discussion with the Headteacher/ Head of School. Governors analyse information with regard to gender, age and ethnic background of all children involved in bullying incidents.

Cyber-bullying Annex

The school's response to cyberbullying, both preventive and reactive, is integrated into its response to its anti-bullying work as a whole, as outlined in the main Anti-Bullying Policy. However, there are some points that are specific to online abuse which are covered in this annex.

What do we mean by cyberbullying?
Cyberbullying can be defined as: *'the use of technologies by an individual or by a group of people to deliberately and repeatedly upset someone else'[1]*

The use of technology as a tool for bullying has increased significantly and, inevitably, changes rapidly as technology use and trends evolve. This kind of bullying can be particularly devastating to the person being bullied, as they are unable to escape the (sometimes anonymous) perpetrator(s) as the taunts and intimidation follow them home, invade their personal space, and can extend to a wide audience. Single incidents of abuse can quickly escalate into cyberbullying by reposting, sharing and commenting, and once something is posted on the internet it is likely to leave a lasting digital trail.

The school regards this type of bullying very seriously and will take action whether reported cyberbullying takes place in or out of school. The Education Act 2006 includes legal powers that allow the Headteacher/ Head of School to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off site. Any disrespectful or inconsiderate behaviour online is both wrong and in direct contravention of the school's Acceptable Use Agreements. Furthermore, criminal laws apply to a range of behaviours linked to cyberbullying including stalking, threats, accessing computer systems without permission, and circulating sexual images. Where cyberbullying could potentially constitute a crime, the school will report the case to the police.

Forms of cyberbullying
There are many forms that cyberbullying can take, including:
- Threats and intimidation by mobile phone, email, within online games, or via comments on websites, social networking sites or message boards
- Harassment or stalking, e.g., by repeatedly sending unwanted messages or making calls (including silent calls) – or using public forums to post derogatory or defamatory statements.
- Vilification/defamation – including posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual, or name-calling and general insults
- Ostracising/peer rejection/exclusion – e.g., setting up a closed group to deliberately exclude an individual, excluding people from online conversations, or talking behind their back
- Identity theft / unauthorised access and impersonation
- Publicly posting, sending or forwarding personal or private information or images

Cyberbullying is often linked to discrimination, including on the basis of sex, race, faith, sexual orientation, gender identity or special educational needs and disabilities. Girls report experiencing a higher incidence of cyberbullying than boys, and in particular are disproportionately subject to online sexual harassment.

Protecting yourself from cyberbullying
Following good online safety precautions can, to some extent, protect you from online bullying. Privacy settings should be kept up to date and personal information such as mobile numbers and email addresses only shared with trusted friends. It is also advisable to monitor your screen time and avoid dependence on social media.

You should also consciously protect yourself from being drawn into bullying others online. It is far easier to post or send an unkind electronic message than to say something hurtful face to face. Initial incidents can have unintended consequences, and one upsetting post or message may escalate into cyberbullying

involving many people over time. Cyberbullying also attracts virtual bystanders, i.e., those who participate in the abuse through their involvement in online surveys and discussion groups, or by passing on images or messages. This adds to the humiliation felt by the person being bullied and will be treated as collusion in bullying by the school.

What to do if you are being bullied online
Whatever form bullying takes, it is very important to report it to a member of staff, parent or other adult you trust.

Do not retaliate or return the message. However, you should keep a record of abusive incidents, particularly: the date and time, content of the message(s), and where possible the sender's ID or the web address of the content and a screenshot. Keeping evidence will be important in identifying the perpetrator(s) and taking action to stop the bullying. You can also block abusive contacts and consider changing your user ID, nickname or profile.

What the school will do
If a cyberbullying incident does not constitute a criminal offence, the school will take steps to contain it by removing upsetting material from devices and services as quickly as possible. If the incident does constitute a criminal offence, it will be reported according to the relevant protocols and the evidence secured appropriately.

The school can confiscate a pupil's devices as a disciplinary penalty, where this is reasonable. The Headteacher/ Head of School and members of staff formally authorised can search a pupil's device without consent if there are reasonable grounds that it contains items specified as prohibited. Locally held content can be deleted, if it is not to be retained as evidence.

Cyberbullying of staff
The school has a responsibility to safeguard staff as well as pupils against the threat of cyberbullying. Malicious conduct against staff online will be pursued with the same vigour. Staff are must keep privacy and security settings up to date, regularly checking their online presence, and observing the guidelines in the Social Media Policy. Any member of staff subject to online abuse should keep evidence of the incident and report it to their line manager or a senior member of staff as soon as possible.

Advice for parents
Protect your child by making sure they understand how to use technology safely and know about the risks and consequences of misuse and be open and curious about your child's activity online, so that they feels they can talk to you if something goes wrong. There are also safety features you can install on devices to help protect the user.

If you are concerned, search your child's name online, look at there profiles and posting on social media and community sites, review web pages or blogs, and watch out for nervous or secretive behaviour, such as rapidly switching screens or displaying anxiety when being kept away from the internet, and for attempts to hide online behaviour, such as empty file history. Be aware that your child may as likely cyberbully as be a target of cyberbullying. If you suspect or discover that your child is cyberbullying or being cyberbullied, contact the school. Parents can also take action by reporting abusive content to service providers or social networking sites.

Further sources of advice and support
[Cyberbullying: understand, prevent and respond](#) (Childnet)
[Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DfE)
[Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#) (DfE)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (UKCIS)

Anti Bullying Alliance – collates resources from member organisations in one place and includes pages for schools, parents and young people. Cyberbullying section: https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/online-bullying

[CEOP](#) for making a report about online abuse

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) for reporting and removing harmful online content

[Professional Online Safety Helpline (POSH)](#) Tel: 0344 381 4772

[Education Support Partnership](#) Tel: 08000 562 561

[Stop Online Abuse](#) provides advice for women and LGBTQIA+ people