

ACADEMY OF MUSIC & SOUND

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

All victimising behaviour is unacceptable, but it is useful to be able to differentiate between teasing and bullying, to be comfortable with the distinction between attitudes and social behaviour that are neutrally non-friendly on the one hand, and situations that are flagrantly hostile and anti-social on the other. In reviewing this Policy The Academy of Music & Sound (AMS) has had regard to the DCSF Guidance '*Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools*'.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to state clearly the strong position held by AMS in its abhorrence of bullying, in all its forms, and to give guidance to students, parents and staff regarding what to look for, what to do and how The Academy of Music & Sound will investigate and deal with behaviour felt to be detrimental to the welfare of the individual.

Definition

A student is being bullied if he or she is being made unhappy by things that others say or do to him or her. This may happen over a prolonged period of time or there may be a number of apparently isolated incidents. Bullying can be physical, emotional or psychological, occur both in and out of AMS, and although there may be cases where teachers bully or intimidate students, most incidents involve student-student relationships. In particular AMS is committed to eradicating behaviour that may be termed 'racist', 'sexist', 'homophobic', related to educational special needs or disability or can in any way be considered 'anti-social'. It should be noted that the situation regarding 'Cyber-bullying' is specifically considered towards the end of this policy.

Symptoms and Outcomes

Some students may be more vulnerable than others. It is important that we are sensitive to students who because of their behaviours or circumstances may be vulnerable. Deteriorating attendance, poor punctuality, lack of progress and

diminishing achievement can be indicators that the pupils vulnerable in some way and susceptible to or suffering already from bullying.

Pupils being bullied may also demonstrate emotional and behavioural problems, physical problems such as headaches and stomach pains, or signs of depression. Bullying is a deeply damaging activity, potentially causing psychological damage for both the person being bullied and the person conducting the bullying, and its legacy can follow young people into adulthood (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Raising Awareness

AMS undertakes to raise the awareness of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and students to the signs and symptoms of bullying and the damage that it can do. Discussion and review of this policy will occur during tutorials each academic year.

Prevention

For the problem of bullying to be tackled successfully a climate needs to be created and established in which all forms of victimisation are discouraged, and where reporting cases of bullying is seen as the normal and proper thing to do. It will obviously be necessary to treat cases of bullying in a different way to one-off acts of aggressive or victimising behaviour. The latter would include but are not limited to pushing someone in the corridor, taking another student's possessions without genuine permission, taunting another pupil, shutting a door in someone's face. In these cases colleagues are expected to intervene with a firm response, indicating that such behaviour is not acceptable. Each case must be treated on its merits and whilst conscious of the need not to underplay the more persistent, if less noticeable, type of misbehaviour, it should not be necessary to carry out a detailed (and time consuming) investigation.

All students need to understand that bullying is totally unacceptable, and be offered strategies for dealing positively and supportively with each other. No member of the community must be in any doubt as to AMS's abhorrence of bullying and its determination to deal firmly with all cases.

Investigating a suspected case of bullying

In essence the term 'bullying' is most properly used when referring to repeated incidents. If the word 'bullying' is used then the anti-bullying policy MUST be activated by the member of staff concerned. Certain circumstances may be better addressed, at least initially, by using terms such as 'unkind', 'unthinking', 'unpleasant', 'insulting', etc.

Although the Course Coordinator is the first point of referral for all pastoral matters, all staff and teachers have an obligation to act immediately when 'bullying' is

suspected or reported. Members of staff should respond personally by carrying out the initial investigation, and inform the course coordinator. Centre Manager and teachers of the students concerned should also be informed.

If, after investigations by the member of staff concerned, it is felt that 'bullying' is indeed the appropriate terminology the requirements of the anti-bullying policy must be followed.

1. Inform the Course Coordinator
2. The Course Coordinator to take over the investigation.
3. Parents of the victim should be contacted by the Course Coordinator to explain the position if this is thought to be necessary (if 18 or under).
4. The Course Coordinator to conduct interviews (all interviews to be witnessed and documented.) with: the victim, any witnesses, the suspected bully or bullies.
5. The victim should be spoken to again now that a clearer picture has been obtained.
6. Parents of the suspected bully to be informed by the Course Coordinator that an investigation is taking / has taken place.
7. A 'case conference' to be held with the Centre Manager to decide upon the appropriate sanction / course of action should any be required.
8. All pupils and parents informed of outcome by their Centre Manager unless agreed otherwise.. (In person or by phone – not email.)

Time Requirements

Dealing with a situation involving bullying takes time – there are a few instant solutions. It is important that if there is likely to be a delay before seeing a suspected victim then he or she must:

1. Be reassured that the matter will be dealt with.
2. Be notified of a time when he or she can be spoken to.

If a pupil is distressed he or she must be allowed to miss lessons until things have settled down.

Interviews

If the problem is reported by the victim he or she must be spoken to first; it is essential that he or she be reassured of AMS's intention to deal with the problem. If attention has been drawn by someone else, it is recommended that the following procedures be used:

1. That as much information as possible be gathered from witnesses.
2. The suspected bully is to be interviewed after as much corroborated evidence as possible has been gathered.
3. The victim should be spoken to at this final stage now that a fairly clear picture has been obtained.

Interviews need to be conducted in a calm, professional and non-confrontational manner with all those involved being allowed to tell their story in their own way. There should be no need to accuse, threaten, issue warnings or ask leading questions no matter how outrageous the behaviour being described.

It is important that:

- The victim feels that he or she is receiving support
- The witness feels comfortable and safe knowing that the school will act upon any actual or threat of reprisal.
- The suspected bully or bullies feel that they are getting a fair hearing.

Documentation

A summary should be made of what has been said by all those involved. Judgement and discretion must be used to decide the extent of documentation necessary: it should be remembered that writing statements down can increase anxiety amongst pupils and therefore prevent the full truth from coming out.

The following need to be included in the files of both bully and victim:

1. The pertinent information from the interviews.
2. A statement of action taken and subsequent follow up.
3. Parental correspondence (if under 18).

Record Keeping

A record of any investigation of potential bullying will be kept by the Centre Manager who will monitor the documentation for any patterns of behaviour, location, time or personnel.

Action

The **victim** will be told that action will be taken to relieve the situation, i.e. the bully will be spoken to.

The **bully** needs to understand how his or her actions are affecting the victim, and if this is acknowledged, he or she can be encouraged to modify his or her behaviour including, where necessary, access to counselling. The bully will also be required to make appropriate reparation. If it is obvious that little progress is being made in this direction then a more direct approach involving sanctions will have to be adopted.

Sanctions

Possible sanctions include:

- A verbal warning as to his or her further conduct, and that this warning is being recorded in the pupil's file.

- As with all offences the Centre Manager has at his discretion the options of suspension and, ultimately, expulsion.
All sanctions will be in accordance to the partner college's or University's policy and procedures

Follow-up

Approximately a week after deciding a course of action it is important to ask the victim whether the problem has been dealt with or whether there have been any consequences or re-occurrences. It may also be useful to do a further follow-up in about a month's time. If there have been reprisals then the Course Coordinator must be informed immediately for further action.

Cyber-bullying

A particularly insidious form of bullying may be referred to as 'Cyber-bullying'. A working definition may be:

'An aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.' (The Anti-bullying Alliance.)

Currently there are several categories of cyber-bullying. They are bullying by:

1. Social media
2. picture or video clip via mobile phone cameras
3. phone calls/texts from mobiles
4. emails
5. forum chats

Ways to stay out of harm's way.

Respect other people both online and off. Do not spread rumours or share secrets, including phone numbers and passwords.

If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm and ignore them.

'Do as you would be done by.' **Think how you would feel if you were bullied.** You are responsible for your own behaviour, make sure that you do not distress others or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

Students are asked to report anything that they see that worries them, whether about they themselves or about other students in the school.

AMS's Policy.

The Academy of Music & Sound will invoke its anti-bullying policy when an incidence of cyber-bullying is reported to the Course Coordinator.

The Academy of Music & Sound will offer support to the recipient of the bullying in the form of information sheets or the addresses of websites, given below, containing advice about how to counter the form of bullying in question.

The Academy of Music & Sound will discuss with the recipient and his or her parents whether the Police should be informed.

What to do if you are being cyber-bullied.

- Keep any evidence. (screen shot internet material, save texts etc, even if the material is embarrassing – such material will be treated with discretion but may be crucial in dealing with the issue.)
- Do not ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust such as a member of staff or your parents.
- Keep calm, don't get angry or frightened. Just don't react; it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Consider signing out of a web site if that is the source of the problem.
- The law is on your side. The Protection from Harassment Act, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act may all be used to counter cyber-bullying.

Useful Resources

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> – advice about staying safe on the internet.

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk> – information and advice about bullying in general.

DfE:

[Preventing and tackling bullying advice](#)

[Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)

[Use of reasonable force](#)

[Behaviour and discipline in schools- guidance for headteachers and staff](#)

[Behaviour and discipline in schools- guidance for governing bodies](#)

[Improving behaviour in schools- guidance report](#)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges guidance](#)

[Sex and Relationship Education guidance](#)

[Creating a culture- Independent review of behaviour in schools](#)

[Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)

[The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign](#)

[Childline- bullying](#)

[Kidscape](#)

[The use of seclusion, isolation and time out](#)

[Project De-Shame: young people's experiences of online sexual harassment](#)

[Step Up Speak Up - Online Sexual Harassment Resources \(11-18\)](#)

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['Just a joke?' - Online Sexual Harassment Resources](#) (9-12)
[Online Sexual Bullying/Harassment Advice for Parents/Carers](#) (9-18)

The AMS students were involved in the development of this policy

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