

Alloa Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy



Alloa Academy is a place where every member of our community is valued, included and respected on our journey to excellence.

RESPECT • AMBITION • RESILIENCE

Review 2023

Clackmannanshire Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all people in its educational establishments and to the promotion of positive social relationships and behaviours. Bullying behaviour in whatever form is unacceptable and must be actively challenged.

The Council believes that children and young people are entitled to learning environments in which they feel safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included and that such environments should support the development of the four purposes of the Curriculum for Excellence, i.e. the development of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

In line with the Council's guidance, we have in place a local policy on anti-bullying, supported by appropriate training and strategies for implementation

Our aim at Alloa Academy is to create an environment where bullying cannot thrive: we support their aim to promote a culture of positive behaviour and respectful relationships in our school.

What is bullying?

We recognise that bullying has a different kind of impact from other behaviour: it affects how children and young people see themselves and the choices they can make. Those who are bullied feel unsafe and other people's actions can affect what they feel they can do. At Alloa Academy we define bullying in line with the national policy 'Respect for All':

Bullying is both behaviour and impact: the impact is on a person's ability to feel in control of themselves. It is unkind behaviour that make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out.

Pupils at Alloa Academy have explored this definition and agree that it is what we should use here. Parents and carers were also consulted on this and agree with the definition.

Bullying can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions, looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these. This behaviour happens face to face and online.

Prejudice-based bullying is when bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice based on an individual's actual or perceived identity; it can be based on characteristics unique to a child or a young person's identity or circumstances.

The Equality Act 2010 supports progress on equality, particularly in relation to nine protected characteristics, which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Prejudice-based language and behaviour will always be challenged at Alloa Academy. We will challenge homophobia bullying based on disability, race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation,

transgender status, religion and belief, socio economic status, appearance, if young people are Looked After, are young carers or are refugees or their families are asylum seekers.

Children's Rights

Children and young people have the right to be safe. Children's Rights sit within a document called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and sets out rights that all young people everywhere are entitled to. This includes the right to be safe, the right to an education and to have views taken into account.

Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. We will make sure that our anti-bullying work at Alloa Academy is informed by the UNCRC and that our staff, pupils, parents and carers are aware of Children's Rights. We are a Rights Respecting School.

Creating an environment where bullying cannot thrive in Alloa

Our values at Alloa Academy underpin all the work we do here including anti-bullying. These values will be modelled by staff at all levels. All young people will be actively encouraged to follow these. Our shared school values are displayed prominently around the school.

Our Vision for Alloa Academy is that:

All members of our community are valued.

We are determined to achieve.

We will keep going in the face of challenge.

Confidence Achieving Excellence Challenge Safe

To fully achieve this vision the complementary values below act as the central guide.

RESPECT	We respect each other, our community and our environment.
AMBITION	We are determined to achieve.
RESILIENCE	We will keep going in the face of challenges.

We aspire to develop our young people by imparting knowledge, developing skills and fostering values to equip them for their journey in life. To this end we aim to ensure that our pupils achieve the best they can during their time with us. Successful achievement allows for the creation of as many opportunities as possible and thus gives our young people the widest possible choice of a variety of pathways to follow.

Pupil Support at Alloa Academy aims to be a centre of excellence celebrating diversity and difference, where we are truly inclusive, identifying and meeting the needs of all young people and providing opportunity for all. Working together with the wider community we will provide a safe, caring environment.

As a Rights Respecting School Alloa Academy is a place where the use of restorative practice is embodied in our culture.

A school rewards system based on merits adds to the motivation of our young people and acts as a visible reminder to all of what is required to achieve. Positive language and praise is used and encouraged by all staff to promote positive ethos and respect.

Responding to Bullying

If a pupil is concerned about bullying, he/she can approach their class teacher and share this. If they are not confident to talk to their teacher, they can approach any teacher or member of staff they feel comfortable talking to. Alternatively, they can tell a parent, grandparent or carer who can share this with the school.

Young people should also be signposted to ChildLine (0800 1111) as they may value the chance to chat to someone who does not know them as a way of coping.

We know that bullying is made up of both behaviour and impact. When investigating and responding to concerns about bullying, we will always look at both behaviour and impact.

Staff at Alloa Academy will always ask:

What was the behaviour?

What impact did it have?

What do I need to do about it?

We will always ask young people who are being bullied what they would like us to do and ensure they can influence the direction we take to support them and their families.

We know that sometimes hurtful behaviour or words can have no impact. At Alloa Academy unkind behaviour, harmful or prejudiced-based language will always be challenged no matter what impact it has.

We also know that sometimes young people can over react to low level behaviour. We will always support someone when they feel this way. We will help them develop ways to manage their feelings and understand their own actions and the actions of others.

In addition to our own pupil consultation, best practice has told us that young people value choices when responding to bullying. It is our role as adults to explore their options and choices and to find a route that works for them. Some young people will prefer to talk about how they feel, some may draw or explore it in other ways, some cope through art, drama and sports.

Some young people will cope better than others and may be more able to verbalise how they feel. It is through exploring what they feel works for them that we find solutions and help young people regain a sense of control over how they feel.

Young people with additional support needs may experience bullying differently and may be targeted because of their additional support need. In addition, social emotional or behavioural needs which can arise from bullying, may be considered an additional support need if the bullying is having an impact on the child or young person's learning, including those young people who are bullying. Staff

at Alloa Academy will always take into account additional support needs and the principles of inclusion when addressing bullying.

It is the responsibility of all staff to follow the Anti-bullying policy.

What can pupils expect at Alloa Academy?

The following points reflect the consultation with pupils.

Pupils can expect:

- To be treated fairly.
- To be safe and to be themselves.
- To be listened to and involved and asked about what is happening to them.
- That bullying will never be ignored.
- To be supported and helped when bullied. We will always address the impact of bullying and support young people and their families to feel safe and ensure that young people who are bullied are helped.
- That staff will monitor the impact of bullying on an ongoing basis and incidents will be reviewed by PT Pupil Support – Guidance.

Young people who have bullied others can expect:

- That there are consequences for bullying other pupils. These will vary in severity depending on each situation and how well they have responded to initial interventions.
- We understand that all behaviour is communication. We need to help young people who are bullying by providing clear expectations about behaviour as well as providing a range of ways to respond. This can include taking steps to repair a relationship and, where appropriate, supporting them to make amends. We will challenge prejudice and offer the opportunity to learn and change behaviour.
- In line with the feedback from parents and carers we recognise that those who are bullying should get support from both parents and the school and that bullying should be dealt with fairly and consistently. Our parents and carers told us that bullying was a very serious issue but recognised that exclusion is not always the answer and many felt it was only ever appropriate as a 'last resort'.
- We will not label young people; instead we will focus on labelling the behaviour and helping them change that.

What our pupils told us

Our pupils told us that sometimes when teachers leave the classroom, even for a short while, behaviour can deteriorate and bullying can become an issue.

They told us that they want to be asked how they would like to proceed when adults are responding to them.

They asked that we keep an eye on them after things have been dealt with – the impact may still be there. Furthermore, even if adults do not think it is serious, it may be for the pupil.

Pupils asked that adults be mindful of false accusations and avoid asking publicly who did something.

Our pupils recognise that sometimes arguments and relationship issues can cross over into online communications. In line with the Council's Policy, we will help our pupils resolve issues and the impact of online bullying wherever we can and seek the support of parents and carers when doing so.

Pupils said, ***'Please do not ignore it even if it is a difficult subject'. Another*** very clear message from pupils was: ***'Just because you may not want to talk about it, does not mean you don't have to'.***

What can our parents and carers expect?

Parents and carers can notify Pupil Support (Guidance) or the appropriate year head if they are concerned about bullying. **Parents will be included and informed when there are concerns about bullying. The school will investigate these first and make a judgment on the severity of the behaviour and the impact before choosing to contact parents or carers. The child's wishes and age and stage will always be taken into account at this point.**

We spoke to parents and carers as part of this policy development process and they told us that partnership with the school was vital to them and that they felt it was a shared responsibility to teach young people about relationships. The vast majority of our parents and carers indicated that they are confident the school will deal with bullying effectively. Parents and carers can continue to expect an open and ongoing partnership with the school.

We asked our pupils about what advice and guidance we should give to parents and carers on responding to bullying. They stated consistently across the school that they would like parents and carers not to over react. They said: ***'Please do not jump in'; 'Keep your ears open'; 'Please avoid doing 20 questions'*** and ***'If I am upset, please do not jump to conclusions'***.

Pupils also asked that adults are mindful of their right to privacy. Parents may wish to share things with the school but young people should be consulted about how much.

- **As a result of this clear feedback from pupils, we ask all adults, school staff and parents and carers, to be mindful of how their response can help a child feel listened to, included and safe.**

Bullying behaviour can also happen online. We strongly encourage parents and carers to monitor their child's use of technology and to challenge any negative usage; as well as support their child if they are receiving bullying messages by ensuring social media accounts are private and have appropriate age restrictions in place.

Monitoring and Recording Bullying

All incidents of bullying will be recorded on SEEMIS, our electronic management of information system, within the Bullying & Equalities module. Staff concerns should be reported to PT Pupil Support (Guidance) and their professional judgement will be used to decide what to record on SEEMIS.

Not all disagreements between young people are necessarily bullying and it is recommended that staff should consider behaviour and impact before deciding if it is bullying and whether it should be recorded.

The purpose for recording is for schools to learn about what kind of bullying is happening in their establishment and to identify if there are trends or issues which require addressing. To this end, recording is an improvement tool.

When recording bullying incidents, the following information must be included:

- The young people involved as well as other adults.
- The type of bullying experienced – name calling, threats or rumours etc.
- Any underlying prejudice including details of any of the protected characteristics.
- The impact of the bullying incident, including consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns.
- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.

By recording and monitoring bullying incidents at a local level, local authorities and schools will be able to identify trends or themes emerging and where improvement can be made to support the wellbeing of all children and young people.

Training

All staff at Alloa have had training on this approach to anti-bullying.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years

When asked to use three words to describe the school, parents and carers said –



The large majority of responses were positive. We aim to build on our success and tackle areas of concern as a school community.

Review 2023

This review took place through pupil consultation.

Policy additions:

- Outline of updated bullying reporting procedures – pupils, parents and carers, and staff
- Signposting to supporting organisations to include Kooth and Local Authority online Mental Health services
- Anti-bullying presentation to staff as a standing item for August in-service
- Anti-bullying assemblies at the start of each session

Actions:

- Have your say contact sheet to be added to the Alloa Academy website for parents and carers and pupils to use
- A glow tile to be added for pupil use with an option of how pupils would like to be contacted
- Policy summary/overview to be developed, to include areas agreed within pupil review group (as noted below)

The policy summary will be produced to be shared on the school website, in PSE google classrooms and highlighted in assemblies. This can also be shared within the transition process. Pupils have asked that the following be included:

- Definition of bullying
- How bullying incidents can be reported by staff, pupils, and parents and carers
- Strategies to deal with bullying – some pupils felt that pupils should be encouraged to seek help when they need it but should look at ways of building their own resilience and strategies to deal with incidents appropriately
- Signposting to supports – Chlidline, Kooth, Mental Health services
- Highlighting to pupils that bullying can be reported to any member of staff

Policy additions and actions will be in place for the start of 2023/24 session.