Trinity Multi Academy Trust

Policy:	Anti-Bullying Policy
Date or review:	September 2025
Date of next review:	September 2026
Lead professional:	Lucy Smith
Status:	Non-Statutory

1. Introduction

1.1. The educational aims of Trinity Multi Academy Trust are to enable all students to fulfil their potential through a broad and balanced range of experiences and to nurture their full personal, moral and spiritual growth through a distinctive ethos led by Christian values.

1.2. We try to ensure that all young people in our care:

- Achieve their full potential.
- Become responsible members of society.
- Develop a wide range of interests.
- Enjoy their education.
- Grow spiritually.
- Respect diversity and difference.

1.3. We achieve this by:

- Establishing high standards in all aspects of academy life for our students through the expertise of teachers, a variety of teaching methods sensitive to the needs of the individual, and through core curriculum.
- Providing effective pastoral support and education based on the skills and experience of all our teachers.
- Encouraging everyone to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, be empathetic to others, respect one another and be honest at all times.
- Ensuring that all students and particularly those who may be vulnerable to exclusion are supported to develop friendship groups.
- Affording opportunities for new experiences and challenges in areas including sport, music, drama and foreign travel.

2. Aims

2.1. The aims of this policy and our anti-bullying strategies are:

- To prevent occurrences of bullying at Trinity MAT academies.
- To ensure that all stakeholders understand what bullying is and how it is dealt with.
- To maintain the ethos of the academy and its mission statement.
- To create a positive and safe learning environment for all.
- To develop individual's self-esteem and respect for others.
- To have a zero tolerance of incidents of bullying.
- To deal with bullying by tailoring a personalised package of student support for mediation and intervention; to include what/how appropriate sanctions are applied.
- To ensure incidents of bullying are reported by specific categories and appropriate education is put in place in response to these.

3. Objectives

3.1. Our objectives, through implementing this policy throughout life at the trust's academies are:

- To identify bullying and accept that it is a problem which can occur in any setting where people are brought together.
- To be clear to all what is meant by the term 'bullying'.
- To establish clear procedures for the course of action to be taken in respect to bullying incidents.
- To create safe conditions for children which are built upon mutual respect, co-operation and equal opportunities.
- To establish that an important part of being valued for children is being listened to, believed and appropriate considered action taking place.

- To have clear procedures, known and understood by all, including a system by which discrepancies can be dealt with and reviewed.

4. Definition of bullying

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be **physical, verbal or psychological**. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace."
Definition taken from the Anti-Bullying Alliance

4.1. **Emotional** - Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force.

4.2. **Physical** - Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference.

4.3. **Verbal** - Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats. Ridiculing an individual.

4.4. **Cyber** - All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology. Appendix 2 provides further information on cyber bullying.

4.5. There are many forms bullying takes, as described in 4.1 - 4.4. Examples of bullying against targeted groups include:

- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- Sexual orientation – offensive behaviour because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse.
- Sexist – offensive name calling, misogynistic behaviour.
- Disablist – offensive name calling, laughing, not supporting or excluding.
- Religion – derogatory remarks about a person's religious belief.

4.6. Bullying can take place inside or outside of academy life. For clarity, this policy extends to any bullying that happens off academy premises, as well as within the academy day.

4.7. In addition to our procedures for dealing with bullying, the academy will seek police advice where they believe a hate crime has been or could be committed.

5. The frequency of bullying

5.1. Bullying can take place several times a week or day. It can go on for months and even years. There is recognition that bullying occurs often beyond the realm of an academy but has manifestations in an academy. We have an expectation of parents that they should be supportive in the process of eliminating any form of bullying.

6. The severity of bullying

6.1. Bullying ranges from horseplay to vicious assault. It is recognised that bullying can be extremely subtle and therefore difficult to deal with.

7. The motivation

7.1. The bully gets pleasure from other people's pain, fear and humiliation. The bully learns that aggressive behaviour allows him/her to dominate and get his/her own way. Sadly, the bully may also learn that creating fear in the victim is a rewarding experience.

7.2. The bully often focuses on younger, smaller or timid children. The bully increasingly relies on threat and force.

8. Direct and indirect bullying

8.1. It is important to distinguish the difference, i.e. between those who are bullies and victims, and the larger group of students who are onlookers. Sometimes the bullies operate in secret places, but often they feel quite confident that no one will stop them, and they bully others in public. The onlookers are then part of the bullying.

9. Child on Child abuse

9.1. Bullying will not be dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' and staff are aware that there is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying or sexual experimentation. This is a matter for professional judgement.

9.2. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned.
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children.
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

9.3. If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused. Appendix 3 details each academy's approach to child-on-child abuse.

10. Recording bullying

10.1. It is widely recognised that there is a vast range of types of bullying and varying degrees of severity. It is often difficult to detect more subtle types of bullying which may not be obvious or overt. However, as in all matters relating to standards and expectations, what follows rests on the professional judgement of all colleagues to exercise that judgement as and where it is felt appropriate and necessary.

10.2. Staff should liaise with key individuals starting with the student's PPT, Year Leader and Assistant Principal (Culture/Safeguarding) The safeguarding team or PPT will work together to investigate the incident. The safeguarding team will be the key liaison with students, parents and staff; ensuring all parties are aware of the progress/outcome of the investigation and when appropriate the sanction and intervention applied to the student(s) involved.

10.3. The Assistant Principal (Culture/Safeguarding) will have oversight of bullying issues through the weekly briefing session with the pastoral team/the student's Bromcom or CPOMS record, and the external counselling services used by the academy.

10.4. Incidents of bullying will be reported to members of SLG on a termly basis and broken down into the following categories:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Verbal
- Cyber
- Sexual orientation – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying
- Racial
- Sexist
- Disablist

- Religious

11. Curriculum, education and support

11.1. Our Anti-Bullying policy is communicated to staff and students in a range of different methods through day-to-day College life. These methods include:

- Education and support in issues regarding bullying, methods of dealing with bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
- Stereotyping will be discussed in the Trinity+ Curriculum.
- Focussed weeks and programmes of work within the Trinity+ system to focus on national campaigns e.g. black History month, E-Safety week, anti-bullying week. In addition, to follow up high profile or relevant news stories about bullying or harassment issues, these will be discussed in PPT sessions.
- Year based trips will be bonding exercises to enable students to learn to work co-operatively in teams.
- PSHE inputs will cover relationships and friendships; teaching students how to manage their relationships with others constructively.
- Trinity+ sessions and core curriculum lessons will include co-operative group work to enable students to explore issues by considering different points of view and to become integrated into the peer/tutor group.
- Staff will encourage student co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work in teaching methodology. Sport and games teachers are particularly effective at promoting teamwork. Students will be allocated to groups selected by the teacher, when appropriate, and these will be changed at regular intervals to allow students more contact with a wider circle of students in their year group.
- Potential victims of bullying should be drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.
- Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through involvement in extra-curricular activities and our pupil leadership groups.

12. Pastoral support

12.1. Students have access to a range of support to help them recognise, deal with and report bullying issues:

- The PPT, Safeguarding Team and Year Manager will provide a one-to-one opportunity for students to talk through relationship difficulties.
- The Pupil Leadership Group will provide an opportunity for students to suggest improvements to aspects of academy life.
- A College Mental Health and Wellbeing Mentor is available to students to offer support and make appropriate referrals.

13. Expectations and guidance

13.1. <u>Staff</u>

- Watch out for early signs of distress in students, e.g.
  - Deterioration of work.
  - Spurious illness.
  - Isolation or the desire to remain with adults.
  - Erratic attendance and punctuality.
  - Internal truancy.
- This behaviour may be a warning of other problems, but it may be indicative of bullying.
- Listen carefully and record all incidents as per policy.
- Offer the victim and the bully support and help by putting our academy procedures into operation. If the victim discloses anything you deem to be a welfare or safeguarding issue, then disclose this information immediately to a member of the Child Protection team (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more detail).

13.2. Students

- In general:
  - As a member of an academy within Trinity Multi Academy Trust, we expect you not to put up with any forms of bullying behaviour.
  - Adults and students will work together to stop bullying.
  - When someone is being bullied or in distress, inform an adult immediately, of any form of bullying behaviour.
  - Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bullying.
  - Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends.
  - Only accept people who do not bully others. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.
  - Informing is not 'telling tales'.

13.3. Parents

- Watch for the early signs highlighted above in your child, if you have concerns contact their academy.
- Parents should know:
  - Each academy's expectation of the parent's responsibility.
  - Parents may have to come into an academy to discuss issues.
  - That each academy takes the issue seriously and will always deal with any parent or student's concerns.

Appendix 1 – Procedures when dealing with bullying

Staff guidance

This guidance provides general advice. Each incident will be dealt with dependant on the severity, the students involved and any relevant circumstances. It also provides an outline of the steps that could be taken when there are instances of bullying.

If bullying is reported, or if a member of staff notices a bullying incident:

For serious incidents of bullying, staff will inform the Safeguarding team/or the Assistant Principal. Normally, the procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.

For incidents, where it is deemed less serious, these will be reported to the PPT (or equivalent), who should investigate the incident and inform the safeguarding team verbally of the outcome. Should the investigation find the incident is more serious, this will be treated as such.

1. Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately

- Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, for example by texting.
- If a student is injured, take the student immediately to the Safeguarding and Medical Manager in the medical room for a medical opinion of the extent of the injuries. (The academy Safeguarding and Medical Manager will record any injuries in the medical record book).
- Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
- Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgemental at this stage.
- Be non-confrontational.
- Ask the alleged bully and the alleged victim to write down details. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.
- Ask additional witnesses/bystanders for information; preferably written.
- Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
- Listen carefully to all accounts - several students saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
- Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach, which moves a bully on from justifying themselves. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.
- If the bullied student might have provoked the bullying incident, help them to understand how.
- Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other students.

2. Record details of the bullying

- Write a very brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet is needed for each student involved.
- Place these interview sheets in the individual files of each student involved.
- Write a more detailed single account and attach written statements of alleged victim, alleged bully and witnesses. Full names of all involved should be included in this account and send this to the Principal.
- The Safeguarding team should keep a record of all incidents of bullying for the students in their college on BROMCOM and/or CPOMS
- Inform the parents of all parties that an investigation is being carried out and that they will be kept informed at every stage of the process.
- Record the telephone call on BROMCOM and/or CPOMS.

3. Take appropriate action to deal with the bully

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the student to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
- If possible, try for reconciliation and genuine apology from the student.
- Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour. Do not however, force a face-to-face meeting. This **must** be the decision of the students.
- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the student to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
- Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken and record it on BROMCOM and/or CPOMS.
- If initial attempts to stop the bullying fail, apply an appropriate level of sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the bullying. (Sanctions can be found in an Appendix of the conduct policy).
- Appropriate staff will informally monitor students over the next half term.
- If bullying is racist, inform the Principal immediately.
- Support the bully.

4. Support the victim - follow up checks

- The appropriate staff should informally check in a considered and sensitive manner whether the bullying has stopped.
- The PPT or other appropriate staff should check informally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.
- The Assistant Principal should check formally the week after the bullying and again during the same half term.
- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places in classes and in the form room.
- Most bullying groups have a leader, with other students in the group being frightened of being bullied themselves.
- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in the academy if bullying is repeated.
- Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups by joining an enrichment opportunity.
- Ask another student to befriend and support the victim (Appropriate staff will advise on potential students to approach). This may involve the formal setting up of a ‘circle of friends’.
- If bullying is about a particular issue (disability for example), mount an education programme during tutorial time; not focused on a particular child.
- If bullying is by students from another college/school, the Safeguarding Team or other appropriate staff member should telephone the relevant Head of Year/Deputy of the other college/school and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation.
- Give constructive advice if the victim seems to have been bullied because they are being a nuisance or intruding.
- Use peer mediation to resolve conflict if appropriate, using trained students only.
- Provide a peer mentor.
- Use events such as Anti-Bullying Week to highlight the issues of bullying.

5. Sanctions

Sanctions to deal with bullying behaviour will be dependent on the level, seriousness and persistence of the bullying.

For minor/single incidents

An apology and assurance that the bullying will stop **or** a detention **or** a piece of extra written work **or** meeting with parent **or** a temporary exclusion from certain areas of an academy’s premises.

In more serious cases, internal exclusion, off-site inclusion, suspension or permanent exclusion may be sanctioned.

Appendix 2 – Cyber bullying

Please note: this policy should be read alongside the academy's policies and procedures on E-safety and Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Useful definition: Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming, and mobile phone. (NSPCC.org.uk)

Useful statistic: 12% of young people in the UK are affected by cyberbullying (UK Safer Internet Centre)

What we will do to protect students from cyber-bullying:

In our schools and colleges, we follow 3 steps in preventing cyber-bullying and managing any reports of cyberbullying. These steps are recommended by the UK Safer Internet Centre.

1. **We discuss online bullying and bullying is discussed on our wellbeing website**
   "We are proactive in discussing cyberbullying with our pupils; how it occurs, why it occurs, and the consequences of such behaviour". (UK Safer Internet Centre)

2. **We understand the tools**
   "We are aware of the reporting mechanisms on different sites and services so we can support our pupils in making a report. We understand what to do to report online harmful or illegal content". (UK Safer Internet Centre).

   - If we are suspicious about someone's communication with a child, we report to CEOP
   - If we see online child sexual abuse images or videos, we should report to the Internet Watch Foundation
   - If we see content that incites hatred, we should report to True Vision
   - If we want to make a complaint about an advert, television or radio programme or other type of content that we think is unsuitable for children to see or hear, we go to Ofcom
   - If we want to make a complaint about an online advertisement, then we can report this to The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

N.B - This is guidance that we follow based on information provided to us from Childnet.com.

3. **We ensure that students in College know how to report a bullying concern**
   - Student should speak to a trusted adult (Member of the Student Wellbeing Team/ PPT/teacher/SLG)
   - Students can access an anonymous system in college to report concerns this is located on all desktops.

Further advice for parents and carers:

https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/cyberbullying-advice-for-parents-and-carers

Appendix 3 – Child on Child abuse

Children can and sometimes do, abuse other children (sometimes referred to as child-on-child abuse). This can happen both inside and outside of College and online (known as cyber bullying).

Child on Child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

College staff have received training in recognising the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

Staff understand, that even if there are no reports of such abuse in College, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Staff are aware that it is important that if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

All staff are trained to understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Staff are clear that whilst these may be responded to through behaviour management processes, there is also a need for this information to be shared with the DSL in order to address any underlying safeguarding concerns.

College staff are particularly vigilant of students with identified Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities who may be particularly vulnerable to peer on peer abuse.

Such behaviour should never be considered as 'banter' or part of growing up. peer on peer abuse often meets the threshold for the recording and investigation of criminal offences by the Police.

Staff becoming aware of any incident of child-on-child abuse must follow the safeguarding process and Child Protection procedures, passing this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. The DSL will then assess this information and where necessary make appropriate referrals to MAST and potentially the Police, should criminal offences be identified.

Child-on-child allegations that do not meet the threshold for police investigation will be subject of internal College investigation by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or senior leaders at the College. This will involve speaking to the victim and any witnesses to secure accounts of the allegation. All findings including any additional information secured, will be considered when making decisions around resolution of the allegation. Outcomes may involve application of the College behaviour policy.

College recognises that victims of child-on-child abuse need to be supported and with parental consent, may secure external agency support where this is deemed appropriate.

All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting child on child abuse, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

College recognises that perpetrators of child-on-child abuse may have identified un-met needs of their own and with parental consultation, may secure external agency support where this is deemed appropriate.

In certain circumstances a risk assessment may need to be carried out in order to further safeguard all individuals involved. A risk assessment should be considered if:

- The students involved are in the same class
- The students involved are in the same year group and therefore may come into contact at break and lunch time
- The students involved may come into contact when making their way to and from the academy
- An incident that has been resolved and deemed low risk in the first instance is repeated
- The incident is potentially a criminal offence
- The incident is of a physical nature of any kind
- In consultation with the victim/alleged victim and their parents/carers a risk assessment is deemed necessary
- Additional information is known by the academy which is relevant to the incident

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