

# Addington Valley Academy ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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<i>Approved by:</i>	John Reilly / Governors
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## Our school commitment

Addington Valley Academy is fully committed to preventing and tackling bullying. Bullying is a deliberate, harmful and divisive act or set of behaviours which can have serious and far-reaching effects on those who experience it, whether 'victim' or 'perpetrator'. At Addington Valley Academy we work proactively with students, staff and families to educate our young people about bullying, to address and rectify bullying or concerns about bullying wherever we find them, and to support all members of the school community to feel safe, valued and respected.

## Ethos and values

At Addington Valley Academy we are committed to safeguarding and nurturing our students so that they are able to achieve ambitious academic and social outcomes as well as build healthy and fulfilling lives.

Our school values of Communication, Wellbeing and Independence all ensure Achievement. These are predicated on ASD specific and best practice approaches and teaching systems that ensure that all of our students are able to attain the highest level of outcome possible. As an ASD and SLD school this also means that our understanding of behaviour as communication is embedded into our philosophy and practice. We understand that the terms behaviour and bullying often suggest a choice that is not in line with the literature and research around autism and severe learning difficulties. As such we use the term LIDS (Learning Interruptions and Dysregulation) to describe the vast majority of the 'behaviour' seen in school. The forensic recording and analysis of this data ensures that patterns and incidents are dealt with proactively as well as reactively.

## Our definition of bullying

Bullying is a particular type of unacceptable behaviour. It is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally and with the cognitive ability and social skills to understand, that this hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. We acknowledge that bullying has no time limit and can be short term or can happen over long periods of time. Due to the needs of our cohort it is the responsibility of the adults around them to ensure that any negative behaviours, LIDS or bullying that occurs is responded to and recorded in an appropriate and meaningful way.

Addington Valley Academy views bullying as anti-social behaviour which is never acceptable. **No person has the right to deliberately make another feel uncomfortable or unhappy.**

Bullying can be:

*Emotional*                      Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)

<i>Physical</i>	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence; invasive, hurtful or threatening physical contact
<i>Verbal</i>	Teasing, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours
<i>Written</i>	Letters, notes, texts, graffiti
<i>Cyber</i>	All areas of online life, such as email and chat room misuse Harassment, shaming, threats or persecution via social media Mobile threats by text messaging and calls Misuse of associated technology e.g. camera and video facilities, iPad, games consoles Making and/or sharing images with the intent to threaten or harm – this includes the non-consensual making/sharing of sexually explicit imagery

Bullying can happen to anyone, but can often be specifically:

- Racist – ethnicity, skin colour, language, religious or cultural practices.
- Homophobic/transphobic – discrimination based on actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Sexual – unwelcome sexual advances or remarks that causes offence, humiliation or intimidation, including pressure to send images of a sexual nature; unwanted physical contact, intimation, coercion; sexually abusive language, imagery or graffiti.
- Disablist – discrimination based on actual or perceived special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 'Difference' – discrimination based on any real or perceived difference e.g. dress, hobbies and interests, family set up, social behaviour.
- Faith-based – discrimination based on matters relating to religious ideology, belief or creed.

Bullying can also form part of, or turn into, child on child abuse. Addington Valley Academy staff are trained to understand how to recognise and respond to both bullying and child on child abuse, and are vigilant in observing the dynamics between students and reporting any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

### Understanding bullying behaviour

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of bully over victim. This can be achieved by:

- Size and/or strength
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying (using email, social networking sites, texts etc.)
- The level of cognition, confidence, or emotional maturity of students
- SEND needs of students
- Hierarchy of staff

At Addington Valley Academy we are vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of safeguarding. We do not wait to be told before raising concerns or dealing directly with the matter.

Students may not recognise, or not be able to articulate, that they are being bullied, or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying. Our staff know our students well and are able to identify those who may be at risk of being bullied. We also monitor behaviour/LIDS logs to ensure we track patterns of behaviour which can cause concern. We are also alert to the dynamics within and between groups of peers, and will take action if harmful imbalances of power are developing.

### Bullying and keeping children safe

Addington Valley Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We ensure that consistent and effective safeguarding procedures and policies are in place to support students and staff at school and follow the guidance of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as well as our Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer which details the specific work, both proactive and reactive, that we undertake to ensure that our students are able to learn and thrive in a safe and supportive environment. These documents can be found on our website:

[https://addingtonvalley.org/about\\_us/safeguarding/](https://addingtonvalley.org/about_us/safeguarding/)

### Bullying and discrimination

Addington Valley Academy is an all through special school for students whose Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have identified ASD and SLD as their primary area of need. As such, we work closely to the guidelines laid out in the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that all of our students are treated fairly and in accordance to their individual learning needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

### Stopping bullying wherever it takes place

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, corridors, on the journey to and from school, and in online forums. It can take place during school time, out of school while on residential visits, day visits, in group activities, and between families in the local community.

At Addington Valley Academy, the majority of our students are non/pre or with limited verbal skills so we consult with students via close observation, weekly parental phone calls and meetings, staff and class meetings, therapist input, to understand where and

when they feel safe/unsafe, as well as teaching what it is to be safe and unsafe, in order to ensure that there are robust and responsive processes in place.

### Preventing bullying

Addington Valley Academy students are encouraged to think about and understand bullying through such opportunities as e-safety sessions, assemblies, PSHE lessons, Anti-Bullying Week and through the general school culture.

Our school's ethos and working philosophy means that all staff actively encourage students to have respect for themselves, each other and their environment. Autism as a diagnosis suggests difficulties with social understanding and social communication as such when students 'shows how others are feeling', or 'cares for others' this is consistently acknowledged and rewarded.

Students are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate.

Methods may include:

- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters that bullying is dealt with quickly
- Restorative, reparation, and empathy developing work with students, e.g. using comic strip conversations to develop understanding
- Assemblies around our school values
- Engagement in PSHE curriculum

Addington Valley Academy has a 'Worries and Concerns' procedure, developed with students, to support our students and class teams in raising any complaint or concern. This can be found on our website, under the Student tab.

These concerns are sent straight to the DSL and DDSL who ensure that they are heard and acted upon. The Worries and Concerns procedure is regularly publicised to students and families.

Staff regularly discuss bullying, LIDS and ASD behaviours, thus creating an atmosphere of openness and building confidence among students and staff to discuss bullying. Staff are trained on bullying, LIDS and ASD to ensure that they have the skills to identify any concerning behaviours or incidents that occur within the school cohort.

Expectations and boundaries around behaviour and LIDS are regularly reinforced by staff, as is the school's ethos of mutual respect and tolerance.

### Reporting bullying

If a student or parent has a concern they should contact the school immediately.

#### **Safeguarding Team:**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Joseph Shepherd,  
[Jshepherd@addingtonvalley.org](mailto:Jshepherd@addingtonvalley.org), [Anna Huzzey, Ahuzzey@addingtonvalley.org](mailto:Anna Huzzey, Ahuzzey@addingtonvalley.org)

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** John Reilly, Jreilly@addingtonvalley.org

Please see our Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer for further details. These can be found on the Safeguarding page of our website

[https://addingtonvalley.org/about\\_us/safeguarding/](https://addingtonvalley.org/about_us/safeguarding/)

Please be aware that our students are especially vulnerable due to difficulties around communication and social understanding. As such we must be aware of bullying and other forms of abuse in a different way, where the adults around the child must note and be aware of the dynamics around the child and any subtle changes in behaviour. We work in partnership with our parents, outside agencies, including transport services, to ensure that our students are kept safe and that, when necessary, we act as a voice for our students.

### Responding to bullying

Where bullying is identified, our primary aim is to ensure that all students are safe. Addington Valley Academy staff will take a twofold approach to resolving the issue: addressing the behaviour which has already taken place, and deploying strategies to change the behaviour so that bullying does not recur. This work will be completed with both sets of parents/carers' knowledge and support.

Measures to address the behaviour that has already taken place will be in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy and Behaviour Procedures, and proportionate to the behaviour. They will always include some form of restorative approach. Depending on the situation, sanctions such as removal of privileges or exclusion may be deployed as part of the overall approach. Any exclusions will be determined in line with the Exclusions Policy.

Where criminal behaviour is suspected or confirmed to have occurred as part of the bullying incident, the Police/Safer School's Police Officer will be informed.

Addington Valley Academy may deploy a range of strategies to help the so-called bully or bullies understand and change their behaviour and make amends to those being bullied. Strategies may include:

- Restorative justice
- Counselling/mediation
- Peer support systems
- Input from our behavioural support team

Any reports of bullying behaviour by Addington Valley Academy students outside of school will be investigated by school staff. If appropriate, action may be taken as above.

All policies are available from the Policies page of our website:  
<https://addingtonvalley.org/key-information/policies/>

### Measuring progress

Addington Valley Academy measures progress and impact of these by utilising the following

- Student voice – surveys, student council
- Parent/carer surveys
- Reviewing data – trends, actions, effective follow up – LID data
- Reporting to governors, CEO monitoring, termly safeguarding audit

### Communicating the policy

This policy is shared with students, where appropriate, via assemblies, tutor time activities and themed days. Staff are given dedicated CPD sessions to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities around preventing and reporting bullying. Parents/carers and other stakeholders have access to this policy via our website.