

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to set out Employ My Ability's policy on the prevention of bullying and its zero-tolerance approach to it.

The secondary purpose is to provide guidance to staff on how to manage bullying of students when it occurs in any setting in which EMA operates.

1.2. Legal and/or regulatory framework

This Policy fulfils the requirements of:

- a) Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended)
- b) National Minimum Standards
- c) Equality Act (2010)
- d) SEND Code of Practice 2014: 0 to 25 years (2014)
- e) Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (2017)

2. Scope

This policy applies to all EMA directors, advisory trustees, staff (full time, part time, permanent, temporary, or sessional), students, agency staff and volunteers.

3. Policy statement

3.1. General

EMA strives to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including Trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff, student and parents should understand what bullying is and be familiar with this policy.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

3.2. Definition

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behavior, usually but not exclusively repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another student or group physically or emotionally. It is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and it is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable bullying behavior include:

- a) Physical, including sexual, abuse*.
[*A form of Peer-on-Peer Abuse is dealt with in EMA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.]
- b) Verbal abuse; name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks.
- c) Cyber-bullying*; which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, 'sexting', photographs, video and e-mail.
[*A form of Peer-on-Peer Abuse is dealt with in EMA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.]

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- d) Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumors.
- e) Complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle.

3.3. Context

Bullying is among the highest concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being; it is also a primary concern of children and young people themselves. It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behavior and may well need help. It should also be recognized that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victims. All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behavior is.

3.4. Raising awareness

Students are educated through the wider curriculum to raise awareness, with discussions of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault, and threatening behavior. If managers feel that a criminal offence may have been committed, they will seek guidance and assistance from EMA's Designated Safeguarding Lead or the police.

3.5. Signs

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behavior, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from classes and activities.

Members of staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with this policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on fail to take swift action.

3.6. Understanding

Whilst EMA deplores all types of bullying, it is essential that any allegation of bullying is taken seriously and that the bully, as well as the victim, is listened to. Thorough investigations should be undertaken as it may reveal that there has been a provocation or a background reason for the bullying behaviour which needs careful addressing and further support.

The focus should not merely be on sanctions for poor behaviour, but a close scrutiny of the reasons that might lie behind it.

3.7. Reporting procedure for a victim of bullying

If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.

Share your feelings with someone else, and whenever possible talk to a member of staff, such as your tutor about the incident. EMA's Designated Safeguarding Lead can always be contacted by sending an email to safeguarding@employability.org.uk.

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If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends, or any trusted adult, as they may well be able to advise you on the best course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can.

There are also people outside of EMA who would be willing to help:

Childline: 0800 1111 (<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline/>)

Children's Commissioner: 020 7783 8330. Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

3.8. Procedure for a student who witnesses bullying behaviour

Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.

Accompany the victim to a trusted adult or suggest that you see their tutor on their behalf. EMA's Designated Safeguarding Lead can always be contacted by sending an email to safeguarding@employability.org.uk

3.9. Reporting procedure for members of staff

Reassure and support the students involved as necessary and advise that you are required to pass details on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Report the incident through the use of either "Schoolpod" or "My Concern" software; refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further details.

In cases of low-level bullying, the tutor is best placed to deal directly with the perpetrators, often in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In cases of physical bullying and those involving Protected Characteristics including disability, race, religion/beliefs, gender, sexual orientation) the Head of Education and Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately. In such cases, a single instance, if sufficiently grave, may result in the Senior Management Team applying the highest of sanctions.

3.10. What will happen

The victim will be interviewed by a member of the Senior Management Team and may be asked to write, or helped to write, an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling if deemed appropriate.

Once it is clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and may be asked to write an account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. It will be made clear why the behaviour was unacceptable.

Support and counselling may be offered and, if appropriate, all parties brought together to resolve the situation. Persistent bullying may be dealt with under EMA's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

3.11. Sanctions

If the Senior Management Team decides that the bullying is sufficiently grave, or if it is a student's repeat offence the following sanctions may be put into place:

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Formal warning

The Head of Education or Operations Manager will speak to the students involved and will contact the parents/guardians giving details of the offence. The parents/guardians will be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter and to be present when their child is given a Formal Warning.

Fixed term suspension

This is at the Head of Education's discretion and can be from 1 – 10 days. The parents/guardians will be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter and to be present when their child is given a Formal Warning.

Exclusion

This is at the Head of Education's discretion in conjunction with the Senior Management Team and could be either temporary, to allow time for changes to be made to support the individuals involved (such as implementing a 1:1, environmental changes, changes to timetables etc), or permanent if the risks cannot be managed. A placement jeopardy meeting may be held between EM, Parents/Guardians and other professional as required.

Involving Police or Social Services

In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, every effort will be made by EMA to resolve such issues internally, unless it is obvious that a criminal offence is likely to have occurred.

3.12. Review, Scrutiny and Training

After incidents of bullying have been dealt with, careful monitoring is required to ensure that the problem has been resolved; relevant Tutors and Learning Support Workers should be briefed accordingly.

The Senior Management Team meet each month and will review incidents of bullying, and assess and respond to any emerging patterns or trends. These incidents are tracked and reported via either Schoolpod or My Concern.

Any lessons learned from bullying incidents will be fed back to Tutors and Learning Support Workers to help reduce the risk of repeat occurrences.

EMA will raise awareness of staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur.

The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on notice boards and will be discussed with students during tutor group sessions, and through the EMA curriculum, and Diversity Calendar.

Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to EMA actions to prevent bullying, and annual student surveys will be used to facilitate an understanding of the level and type of bullying that students might have experienced.

4. Roles & responsibilities

As defined within the above.

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5. Implementation

The Senior Management Team at EMA have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy; however, all employees are required to adhere to and support its implementation.

All employees are to be made aware of any changes to this policy.

6. Support, advice and communications

Requests for further advice, support or implementation guidance on this policy can be obtained from safeguarding@employability.org.uk.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, following which the revision number and date will be updated to ensure that staff always know that they are referencing the correct policy.

Should there be a need to change the content of the policy before its annual review date then please send a notification to compliance@employability.org.uk

8. Associated documents

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Cyberbullying Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Behaviour Policy

Exclusions, Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy

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