Academic Guardians UK

Bullying & Cyber Bullying Policy

This policy outlines the Academic Guardians UK (AGUK) approach to reports of bullying and cyber bullying and what procedures to follow. This policy will be applicable for disclosures and incidents which happen to an AGUK student and provide suitable guidance on the steps to take to support the students' needs as well as informing stakeholders of where to obtain additional external support and learning resources.

This policy is closely linked the Online e-safety, Youth produced sexual imagery 'Sexting', and Peer on peer abuse policies and forms part of the wider approach to Safeguarding in line with the organisations Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

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Policy owner	Updated	Review date
Andrew Kettle	August 2024	August 2025

Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Bullying & Cyber Bullying Policy

Policy:	Bullying & Cyber Bullying Policy and Procedure
Summary:	This policy outlines the Academic Guardians UK (AGUK) approach to reports of bullying and cyber bullying and what procedures to follow. This policy will be applicable for disclosures and incidents which happen to an AGUK student and provide suitable guidance on the steps to take to support the students' needs as well as informing stakeholders of where to obtain additional external support and learning resources. This policy is closely linked the Online e-safety, Youth produced sexual imagery 'Sexting', and Peer on peer (child on child) abuse policies and forms part of the wider approach to Safeguarding in line with the organisations Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
Policy Owner:	Andrew Kettle (Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead) Update: August 2024
Next Review Date:	August 2025

Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Bullying & Cyber Bullying Policy

1. Policy Introduction

1.1 Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

1.2 Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. Our response to these incidents will be the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk, maintaining the primary concern being the welfare and protection of the young people involved.

1.3 This policy forms part of the Academic Guardians UK safeguarding arrangements and all incidents of bullying and cyber bullying will be dealt with as safeguarding concerns. The policy is formed and based on the 'Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People' (the 'UKCCIS Guidance') and should be read in conjunction with the following AGUK policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection, Online e-safety, Youth produced sexual imagery 'Sexting', and Peer on peer (child on child) abuse policies.

1.4 Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead & Prevent Lead – Director Andrew Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07823 321 993 or andrew@academic-guardians.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Director Dawn Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07931 954 106 or dawn@academic-guardians.co.uk

Concerns in relation to the Managing Directors should be addressed to the Director of Safeguarding, Andrew Kettle, Concerns in relation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be addressed to Dawn Kettle and vice versa, on a confidential basis without disclosing to the safeguarding officer the matter relates to. As the DDL & DDSL are connected parties, then concerns about either can also be addressed with the Safeguarding Partners as detailed below. Concerns about all Directors should be directed to Crimestoppers, which will remain confidential.

Safeguarding Partners - Academic Guardians UK registered office is within the borough of Islington whose current safeguarding contact details are as follows:

Website: https://www.islingtonscp.org.uk/are-you-worried-about-a-child

Children's Services Contact Team - +44 20 7527 7400

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - +44 20 7527 8102

Information about services for children can be found on the Islington Family Directory https://www.islingtonscp.org.uk/

Police Referrals - Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) +44 20 8733 6495 or +44 20 8733 6500 For Emergencies - 999

All Local Safeguarding Partnerships & MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs) contact details are provided to Homestay Host families, attached to the student profile on confirmation of booking.

A link to the list of Local Safeguarding Partnerships can be found here.

2. Types of bullying

2.1 There are many different types of bullying that can be experienced by children and adults alike, some are obvious to spot while others can be more subtle. The different types of bullying that we look at below are some of the ways that bullying could be happening.

2.1.1 Physical bullying

Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property. Physical bullying causes both short term and long-term damage.

2.1.2 Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. While verbal bullying can start off harmless, it can escalate to levels which start affecting the individual target. Keep reading in this section for techniques to deal with verbal bullying.

2.1.3 Social bullying

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as covert bullying, is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Social bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

2.1.4 Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies, including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms. Cyber bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying.

Cyber bullying can include:

- Abusive or hurtful texts emails or posts, images or videos
- Deliberately excluding others online
- Nasty gossip or rumours
- Imitating others online or using their log-in

Further information and guidance on Cyber bullying is provided in the Online e-safety policy which along with all other policies are available on the organisations intranet SharePoint sites, local coordinator, student, parents/agents and homestay host family portals. The policies are also available on the website at https://www.academic-guardians.co.uk/our-policies.

3. Academic Guardians UK procedures for dealing with reports of bullying and cyber bullying

3.1 If an AGUK staff member, including homestay hosts and drivers is approached by a student or parent/agent of a student and informed that the student is a victim of bullying/cyber bullying they will approach the concern with sensitivity and professionalism.

3.2 The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to pupils involved, and the risks can be managed within Academic Guardians UK support framework and network for the child. In such circumstances the procedures continue.

3.3 AGUK will take direction and support from the parents/agent and schools where appropriate in terms of supporting the student who is a victim of bullying or cyber bullying. The best course of action will be determined in accordance with suggested guidance as detailed in section 4.

3.4 Staff, homestay host families, local coordinators & drivers should follow the usual reporting procedures as for any other safeguarding concern as laid out in Academic Guardians UK Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. Copies of the reporting forms are available on all the AGUK portals and as appendix documents in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy which is also available in the portals and online. In addition, copies may be requested from the office team by emailing office@academic-guardians.co.uk.

3.5 Concerns and child protection issues are recorded in their Safeguarding files, which remain secure and confidential. An additional student folder will be created in the safeguarding teams private secure portal to manage all correspondence and recorded actions. Dates and notes pertaining to a student are entered onto a monitoring spreadsheet which again remains secure and confidential. Safeguarding and child protection information is stored securely and can only be accessed by the DSL and DDSL.

4. Training & Support

4.1 AGUK will support staff with the provision of information and guidance and signposting to training

resources, as they become available, which will assist staff in preventing and responding to bullying and cyberbullying.

4.2 A copy of this policy along with the all the AGUK polices are made available to the staff, homestay hosts, local coordinators, drivers, students and parents in the AGUK SharePoint sites and portals. Reference to these policies are also made within the School, Student, Parent and Homestay host handbooks.

4.3 Childnet 2016 Cyber bullying guidance provides useful support and resource reference for the AGUK team. The guidance comprises of four main sections and whilst this was originally commissioned for schools, it is very relevant to Education Guardians in supporting students who may be suffering from cyber bullying. The sections and resources available are highlighted as follows:

a) Understanding Cyberbullying
https://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1-Understanding-cyberbullying1.pdf

b) Preventing Cyberbullying
https://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2-Preventing-cyberbullying1.pdf

c) Responding to Cyberbullying
https://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/3-Responding-to-cyberbullying1.pdf

d) Supporting Staff
https://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/4-Cyberbullying-Supporting-School-Staff.pdf

5. Further Supporting Resources

Academic Guardians UK are aware of many resources being made available to provide additional advice or support including the following organisations:

Family Lives
Bullying - if you think you are being bullied call 0808 800 2222 or visit their website at –
https://www.familylives.org.uk/

Kidscape
There to provide children, families, carers and professionals with advice, training and practical tools to prevent bullying and protect young lives.
http://www.kidscape.org.uk