



BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

## **COUNTERING BULLYING POLICY**

**Person Responsible: Deputy Head Pastoral**

**Reviewed: September 2020**

**Next full review: September 2021**

## **Aim**

At Beeston Hall School we aim to have an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

All forms of bullying, including those motivated by prejudice, must not be tolerated and should always incur a disciplinary sanction.

No one should suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. It should be noted that the seriousness of bullying, both physical and emotional, may cause psychological damage.

Providing a safe and happy learning environment is integral to achieving the wider objectives of school improvement:

- Raising attainment
- Improving school attendance
- Promoting equality and diversity
- Ensuring the well-being of all members of the school community.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Beeston Hall School because:

- It is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who support them.
- It interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation.
- It is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School.

In line with Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, Beeston Hall School ensures that an effective anti-bullying strategy has been drawn up and is being implemented. The effective anti-bullying strategy links in with the Equality Act's (2010) three aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Through the operation of this policy we aim:

- To maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School.
- To deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions set out in the Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

## **What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages or the Internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the school's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in many ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the heat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

## **What is cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

The rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided a medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day with a potentially bigger audience and more accessories as people forward content at a click.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control.

Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

Cyberbullying can also involve adults; even though technology has provided wonderful opportunities for both teaching and learning, it has led to some teachers becoming the victims of internet messaging that undermines or ridicules them. It is important that parents make clear that this is not acceptable behaviour and lead by example. What was once a conversation at the school gate between small groups of parents and carers can now become a conversation with perhaps hundreds of "friends" on social networking sites, permanent, with a large audience, and easily shared. Whilst parents and carers have the right to be critical of decisions made by schools or even individual staff members, they should

raise concerns in an appropriate way and not become abusive or libellous. Open conversations on social networking sites are not private and can easily be reported to school staff, even if it was not the intention to share their views directly.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyberbullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Refer to the School's Screening, Searching and confiscation policy.

For further information please refer to the Cyber Bullying Policy located at the end of this policy.

### **Dealing with bullying What Beeston will do:**

We are a caring School and will not tolerate bullying – we will listen to worries or anxieties.

Each case will be investigated, and action taken:

- Beeston is a proactive school which takes measures through positive education and reinforcement to make children aware of the dangers of bullying and the necessity to counter bullying wherever it may arise. Pupils are made aware that action is always taken, that this will be designed to make the situation better and the victim will not be threatened, nor will the situation be made worse by their action.
- We endeavour to involve the children and other caring individuals in identifying situations where bullying may be a concern. Where identified, dangerous times and areas are given increased supervision.
- All incidents or suspicions of bullying are investigated, with bully and victim interviewed separately along with any witnesses.
- We will in the first instance try to help the bully to be aware of the effect of their behaviour and adapt it into more positive channels. This should be coupled with an acknowledgement of his/her guilt, an apology to the victim and an appropriate sanction.
- We will work with the victim to see if any of their behaviour is causing the bullying, but we will protect the victim by staff presence and by the involvement of other children.
- Staff will be informed of any bullying incidents and told of any outcome or ongoing concern.
- If the bullying is serious or persistent, then the parents of both bully and victim will be informed and the parents will be asked to become involved in stopping it.
- If the bullying continues, the bully could be isolated in class or excluded from school.
- We will regularly update and evaluate our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers.
- Use PSHEE to openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality, and also children with different family situations, such as looked-after children or those with caring responsibilities. We will also teach children that any prejudice-based language is unacceptable.
- We will make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may

have occurred outside of school including cyber-bullying.

- We will provide effective staff training, ensuring that all of the school staff understand the principles behind the Countering Bullying Policy, its legal responsibilities regards in bullying, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.

After incidents, all staff monitor the situation and report back to the Deputy Head during pastoral meetings, with, as necessary, a follow-up meeting with parents.

We encourage every pupil to understand that:

- Every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously by following the flowchart in Appendix 1.
- Members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received.
- There is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying. A pupil who complains will receive support and advice, and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no-names basis.
- The primary aim will be for the bullying to cease and that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

## **Prevention**

### **Anti-Bullying Culture Ethos:**

Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:

- Everyone will uphold the Countering Bullying Policy.
- A pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it.
- A complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously.
- No one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

### **Equal opportunities:**

In School and in every year group:

- Discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable.
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School.
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards both sexes through the curriculum and tutorials.

### **Staff:**

Through their training and experience, members of the staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- Celebrating achievement.
- Anticipating problems and providing support.
- Disciplining sensibly and fairly in line with the School's Rewards and Sanctions Policy.
- Making opportunities to listen to pupils whilst following advice laid out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.
- Acting as advocates of pupils.

### **Anti-discrimination law:**

Staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school. Pupils:

Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the school. They are encouraged:

- To celebrate the effort and achievements of others.
- To hold and promote positive attitudes.
- To feel able to share problems with staff.
- To turn to someone they trust if they have a problem.
- Not to feel guilty about airing complaints.
- To treat meals as pleasant social occasions.

### **Anti-Bullying Systems**

#### **Approach:**

Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- Vertically, through all year groups.
- Horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities.

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

#### **Complaints:**

A pupil who is being bullied should complain without delay and can do so in several ways. S/he can:

- Tell his/her parents, his/her Form Tutor, Headmaster, Deputy Heads, Boarding Houseparents, a Matron, or any other member of staff or a responsible older pupil. Place a note in the "Worry Boxes" situated at the bottom of the stairs in Main House, in the Library, on the stairs in the main teaching block, in the Music School and in the art room. These boxes are bird boxes and the member of boarding staff will check these when they do the evening lock up. This is usually DLP. DLP will then share this with the Deputy Head Pastoral and with the DSL if necessary.
- There is also a staff 'worry box' in the staff room that the Deputy Head Pastoral will oversee.
- Contact our Independent Listener, Bobbie Coe.
- Contact Childline.
- NSPCC.
- Office of Children's Commissioner.

#### **Vigilance:**

Members of staff are vigilant at **all times**, but particularly:

- Before and in between lessons; in the queue for the Dining Hall and changing rooms.
- In the Boarding House, particularly in dormitories. On school transport.

**Meetings:**

Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- Prep, Pre-Prep and Deputy Head Pastoral
- Form tutors and pupils in their form tutor group.
- School staff and matrons.
- Boarding team.
- Morning briefings and daily updates.

The result of these meetings is to feed back information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils.

**Record keeping:**

Staff maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils. The Deputy Head Pastoral keeps a yearly folder in his office with hard copies and staff input information into the school management system on the specific pupil's profile.

**Education:**

School declaration on safeguarding children is published in the termly calendar. PSHEE is taught weekly from Year 3 to Year 8 and the issue of bullying is addressed regularly as well as recognizing anti-bullying the national week. More Age appropriate provisions for older pupils are put on through collapsed days in the timetable, with experts who advise on the impact of verbal, emotional, cyber or physical bullying.

**Staff training:**

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that staff have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- Awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying and how to deal with cases.

And in year groups, ensuring that:

- There is an adequate presence of staff.
- Staff are actively involved with pupils in all areas of the year group when they are on duty.
- Attempts are made to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among pupils.
- There is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal.
- There is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms.
- Good behaviour and discipline are maintained. Pupils' responsibilities:

We emphasise with prefects and senior pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older boarders are encouraged to keep an eye on younger boarders and offer support, where it is needed, and in particular:

- The responsibilities of senior pupils are appropriately limited.
- Members of staff expect prefects and senior boarders to offer supervisory support.

**Monitoring:**

Every complaint or report of bullying must be recorded on the MIS system, ISAMS (the school's Management Database and are logged under the reward and conduct manager on ISAMs by staff. This is then reviewed and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will then decide if the incident is indeed a bullying incident. If it is, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will log this on the wellbeing manager with the nature set to bullying. This will ensure a log of bullying incidents can be tracked and referred to if future incidents occur. The wellbeing manager will also provide reminders for regular actions. The DSL monitors entries onto the Wellbeing Manager to see if there is a safeguarding concern to action.

The Headmaster records all major sanctions and the record is monitored by the Chairman of the Governors regularly.

**Reporting incidents****Victim:**

There are many reasons why a pupil who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. S/he may become demoralised and may say, for example:

- It is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular.
- The things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult.
- It is all my fault anyway for being overweight/too studious etc.
- There are too many of them; there is nothing the staff can do.
- It will get back to my parents and they will think less of me.
- I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin.
- I will lie low and not audition for a part in the school play etc.

**Witnesses:**

Nobody may have witnessed the bullying. However, there are also reasons why a pupil who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. S/he may say:

- It is "grassing" and I will become unpopular.
- It is not my concern anyway. I don't rate the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her.

**Procedures****Guidelines:**

The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms "should" or "must". The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

**Initial complaint:**

A person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- Firstly, offer advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim.
- Report the allegation to the child's Form Tutor as soon as possible.

**Assessment:**

The victim's Form Tutor/Mentor will see the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation:

- Is the child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm? If so, the DSL will be informed and the Safeguarding procedure will take place.
- The nature of the incident/s – physical? Verbal? Exclusionary? Etc.
- Is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- Is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- Has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed – the Headmaster? Parents? The School's DSL?
- Can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?
- What is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- There has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully.
- The complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action below).

The member of staff should refer to the 'How to deal with a report of bullying' flow chart and follow the procedures contained within it.

**Serious incident:**

If the Form Tutor believes the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm or that serious bullying behaviour has occurred or has recurred after warnings have been given to the "bully", s/he must inform the Headmaster and the Deputy Head Pastoral, who will inform the DSL if this is deemed a safeguarding issue. The DSL will follow the School's Safeguarding procedures.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and will be reported to the police. These include:

- Violence or assault
- Theft
- Repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- Hate crimes

**Range of action:**

When a complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- Advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim.
- Advice and support to the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour.
- A supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict.
- A disciplinary sanction against the bully laid out in the Rewards and Sanctions Policy.
- In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the School permanently.
- Action to break up a "power base".
- Moving either the bully or victim to another tutor group after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff.
- Involving Social Services or the Police.
- Notifying the parents of one or both pupils about the case and the action which has been taken.
- Such other action as may appear to the Headmaster to be appropriate.
- Noting the outcome in the School Management System and on pupil files.

**Monitoring:**

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Action may include:

- Sharing information with colleagues and with pupils in the Form Tutor Group and/or Boarding House so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely.
- Ongoing counselling and support.
- Vigilance.
- Mentioning the incident at staff meetings.
- Reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School.
- Liaison between relevant staff.

**Formal Complaint:**

If the victim or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the **Complaints Policy**. The Complaints Policy is available from the School Office.

**Review of the process:**

After an incident of bullying has occurred, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will call a meeting of the relevant staff to discuss the process, actions and outcomes the school took to combat the bullying and stop it from occurring again. Any improvements to the process will occur and the policy will be updated accordingly.

## **Safeguarding children**

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern when there is:

“reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm”.

Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their DSL as outlined by the Safeguarding Policy.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## **Criminal law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the Headmaster who may in turn refer the incident to the Police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

## **Bullying outside school premises**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Headmaster should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police or the anti-social behaviour coordinator in the local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the Police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

## **Staff Training:**

Staff training is essential in order to combat any form of bullying. Every member of staff is required to read the Countering Bullying policy on induction and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will ensure regular INSETs occur to help staff understand the principles of the Countering Bullying policy, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available; where appropriate, Beeston Hall School staff will invest in specialist skills to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities who are often more vulnerable.

## How to deal with a report of bullying



