

E.3a Anti-bullying Policy (Senior School)

<i>Policy Last Reviewed:-</i>	<i>September 2018</i>
<i>Next Review:-</i>	<i>September 2019</i>
<i>Review Initiated by:-</i>	<i>Deputy Head</i>

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Birkdale School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Birkdale School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Discipline and Sanctions Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting of another pupil or group of pupils physically or emotionally that is repeated over time. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). Recognising KCSIE 2018 and being mindful of peer-on-peer abuse, it could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's stance on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

SEND/LGBT PUPILS

Children who have been identified as having a Special Education Need or Disability or LGBT may be particularly vulnerable to bullying. Staff should be alert to this and should consider the nature of the child's difficulties if allegations reports of bullying are brought to light. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support and reassured that they will be kept safe.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHEE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- Other lessons, particularly RE but also English and History amongst others, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.

- Any pupil who is being bullied or who knows bullying is taking place should tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once. Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents and check for patterns of bullying behaviour.
- A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is at risk or likely to suffer significant harm.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of consisting of Form Tutors, the Chaplain, and Heads of Section who support the Deputy Head Master and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying. We encourage staff to have listening ears and to pass on information about any suspected bullying to the pastoral heads of Section and/or Deputy Head but also to act immediately themselves where called upon to prevent any acts of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- The School has links with and access to a counselling service and will, where appropriate, forward details of this service to parents / pupils.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Sick Bay displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, NSPCC, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans, Footprints, Mind, Papyrus.
- We provide leadership training to our School Prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils. School Prefects are encouraged to speak with the Deputy Head Master as soon as they develop concerns about any individual within the school.
- There is no tradition of initiation ceremonies at Birkdale School. Initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation will not be tolerated or permitted.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, and (as appropriate) in cyber-space, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.” (W. Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>)

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Facebook, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Birkdale School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its ‘Acceptable Use Agreement’ for the safe use of IT equipment and the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils’ use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying which covers blocking and removing contacts from “buddy” lists.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in classrooms, or public areas of the school, except where pupils have received the express permission of the member of staff taking the class or activity. On such occasions the use of a mobile phone is permitted for the sole purpose of assisting the pupil’s learning. The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed except where express permission has been granted by a member of staff.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team (usually Form Tutor or head of Section) as soon as possible.

- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded.
- Staff should be informed as appropriate. In serious incidents, the Deputy Head Master will be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator with regard to offering support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties will usually be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter as appropriate. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed.

This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.

- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Head Master has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the school's view that it is better to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures where possible, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- Records of bullying incidents are kept to enable patterns to be identified and to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's approach.

Related Documents and Policy

D3: Discipline and Sanctions Policy

E4: Safeguarding Policy

E4c: E-Safety Policy

ICT Acceptable Use Agreement

Section E Appendix: Guidance on Dealing with Bullying