

Benjamin Britten School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Bullying is a serious concern for children. Research with 103,000 learners in 2017/2018^[1] found 12% had bullied another person once or twice in the past month, 21% had been bullied once or twice in the past month, with 10% bullied at least once a week. Estimates of the prevalence and nature of online bullying^[2] found one in five children aged 10 to 15 years in England and Wales (19%) experienced at least one type of online bullying behaviour (ONS, 2020).

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, staff, and parents/carers.

The School's Values

At Benjamin Britten School we believe that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means an environment free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how incidents of bullying are dealt with, including procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at Benjamin Britten School.

As a school we all have the right to:

- feel safe in the classroom and around school
- not experience peer pressure
- not be teased or abused
- be forgiven for our mistakes
- be respected for who we are.

If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell a staff member and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

It will also have due regard to the current iteration of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Why is it Important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different and appropriate ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Bullying is changing all the time. The increase of social networking and use of electronic devices has led to various forms of bullying being on the increase, such as cyber bullying.

Bullying Behaviours

Bullying behaviour is repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe[3]:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

- **Emotional bullying** – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding books, threatening gestures).
- **Physical bullying** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- **Racist bullying** – bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour via racial taunts, graffiti, gestures etc. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- **Sexist bullying** – bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate, or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- **Sexual bullying** – bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal, or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
- **SEND bullying*** – Bullying behaviour based on another person's special educational needs or disability. All schools have a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to protect disabled children and those with SEN against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- **Bi-phobic bullying** – bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Homophobic bullying** – bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Transphobic bullying** – bullying based on another person's actual or perceived transgender status, gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- **Verbal bullying** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- **Cyber bullying** – an aggressive, intentional act carried out by individuals or a group using electronic forms of contact, i.e., the internet, text messages, social media etc.

* At Benjamin Britten we recognise that some pupils with SEND may have difficulties in reporting their experiences of bullying. This may be because they are unable to recognise that they are being bullied, they may not be able to verbalise that they are being bullied or they may experience increased feelings of anxiety which prevent them from 'speaking out'.

Even if an incident does not qualify as bullying behaviour, we encourage our pupils to still report it to help resolve it and prevent it from happening again.

Deepfake-enabled bullying

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. They also have the potential to be used to bully others, for example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. The school will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with this policy.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school, including doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual route
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide, or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, they may be due to deeper social, emotional, or mental issues but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Measures to Prevent Bullying

Strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant, and supportive ethos at the academy. All staff, parents/carers and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the academy.

We will use a range of methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Curriculum work – bullying is discussed as part of the curriculum. Commonalities, difference, and respect for others is promoted and celebrated throughout lessons.
- Weekly assemblies where expectations are shared, following a themed rota of:

Celebration	Anti-bullying	Online Safety	Healthy Lifestyles	Personal Safety	Diversity
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- Mentoring – used by staff to help individuals at break times and lunchtimes.
- Training for midday supervisors so they can be aware of vulnerable students.
- Display materials – anti-bullying posters and signs around the school.
- Work/link with outside agencies – the Police, Family Support Workers, Social Services, the School Counsellor, and the Youth Offending Team.
- Registration activities, which involve Life lessons and Well-being Wednesday.
- Guests delivering sessions in line with the RSHE curriculum.
- Access to the school's Anti-bullying Ambassadors.*

It is everybody's responsibility, who witness any bullying in school or travelling to and from school to report immediately. They must also be clear about what happened and who was involved.

Teaching and non-teaching staff – All staff have a specific responsibility to prevent bullying. Any member of staff is expected to challenge pupils if they witness bullying. Staff who witness or have bullying behaviour reported to them must record the incident on Bromcom. All staff have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Form tutors – Form tutors are expected to ensure that form activities are completed, and that appropriate time is given to any anti-bullying or well-being pastoral curriculum activities which may support with emotional behaviour. Form tutors are also the daily contact with their tutees and will develop a relationship which can provide mentoring and a trusting relationship with a listening ear.

Year teams – The Head of Year and Pastoral Leader play fundamental roles in addressing bullying concerns.

They must follow the following procedures:

1. The Head of Year (HoY) and/or Pastoral Leader speaks to the students individually and identifies the issues.
2. The matter is investigated by interviewing the target, perpetrator, and other witnesses separately. Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils interviewed, including electronic communication.
3. If appropriate, all parties (the target, perpetrator, and witnesses) are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture.
4. All concerned pupils are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.
5. Parents of all pupils involved are contacted should this be found to be a bullying incident (within 48 hours of report).
6. The information is shared with the Head of Year and the Head of Lower or Upper School to monitor future behaviour.

7. Record the bullying incident on Bromcom, updating the pupil's safeguarding chronology if applicable.
8. Log any communication with parents/carers/external agencies etc. on Bromcom.
9. Issue any necessary consequences to resolve the issue.

Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic and sexual bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

Senior leaders – Senior leaders are required to ensure that bullying events are monitored, and that support and sanctions are applied consistently and fairly. Annual records are to be reported to the governing body and trends and patterns identified are discussed at leadership meetings.

Governing body – Governors are responsible for ensuring that the school meets the statutory duties with regard to equality legislation. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to protect pupils from discrimination and harassment based on disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>) has produced guidance for schools on their duties under the act. The Act requires schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to actively promote equality. This is vital for the prevention of prejudice related bullying.

Governors have a responsibility to ensure schools are complying with their duty to keep children safe from bullying and harm. They must ensure that school acts to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

Procedures

"It is OK to tell": If the school is to work to eliminate bullying, to deal with specific cases, then we need to know that it is happening. The target must be encouraged to talk about the problem... to parents, friends, teachers, and other staff in school. The school community as a whole, needs to be 'eyes and ears' and if anyone suspects that bullying is taking place then they need to make their concerns known. The target can alert staff in school by:

- speaking to the Year teams or another member of staff
- informing our Anti-bullying Ambassadors* at 'The Support Hub'
- completing an online student concern statement (there is a link on the school website to 'Report a Concern' using an online form).

The school has a 'staged approach' to dealing with bullying behaviours:

Stage Linked to the School's Behaviour Policy	Target	Perpetrator
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<p>Initial concerns expressed by pupil, staff members or parents.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Information is shared with Year team to investigate. If bullying is determined, it is logged on Bromcom and on the pupil's chronology.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Repetition of the bullying is reported by pupil or parents, staff members or peers. Year team to investigate. If bullying is determined, it is logged on Bromcom and on the pupil's chronology. Sanction imposed.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>If further bullying repetition occurs, the Year team are to investigate. If bullying is determined, it is logged on BromCom and on the pupil's chronology. Sanction imposed.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Incidents discussed in wider leadership meetings, possible further actions.</p>	<p>Pupil needs to be able to express anxiety, through talking to parents, peers, and staff.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Pupil knows where they can go and who they can talk to in school- Form Tutor, Year team, Anti-bullying Ambassadors*, Teachers or other school staff. Pupils also know how to report a concern online.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Pupil needs to know that there is some positive action as a result of making their feelings known.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Parents informed.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Actions discussed and implemented.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Monitoring through the year team and follow up check-in sessions.</p>	<p>Discussion. Sanction may be imposed depending on the severity of the incident. Parents informed.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Possible 'supported restorative' meeting between parties to talk through issue.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>All communication recorded regarding the incident on Bromcom, including a recorded warning that repetition would result in a further sanction.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Police and external agencies involved if appropriate.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Monitoring through the year team and follow up check-in sessions.</p>
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Sanctions which can be imposed upon the offender or bystanders (including passers-by who do not report incidents witnessed, as per Year team's discretion)

- Removal from the class.
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtimes.
- Detention.
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- Isolation (in the Silent Learning Area).
- Internal exclusion (in the Bungalow).
- Suspension.
- Permanent exclusion.
- If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.

***Anti-bullying Ambassadors** – In October 2022, some of our pupils and 2 members of staff received training by The Diana Award (a charity set up in 1999 in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales as a legacy to her and her belief that young people have the power to change the world) to become Anti-bullying Ambassadors.

Within their roles, they:

- are available at break times and lunchtimes at 'The Support Hub' for pupils to share concerns with them
- provide support when completing the online student concern forms
- are a role model for other pupils.

Outside of School

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the academy premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school's premises, such as online, offline, on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Whilst we will endeavour to address bullying concerns brought to our attention that happens outside of the school setting, we are restricted in our ability to investigate with all incidents posted on social media that are inaccessible to us.

Where bullying outside school is reported to academy staff, it is investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the pupil on academy premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff.

The headteachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the academy premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on academy premises, and therefore not under the lawful charge of an academy staff member.

The Assistant Headteachers are responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police, or the anti-social behaviour coordinator of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

Parents' Support

Research[4] suggests that children benefit when there is a strong partnership between schools and families. Parents and carers have the responsibility to contact the school to share any bullying concerns with the Year teams, this can be done through emailing, telephoning, messaging via the MCAS (My Child at School app).

Pupil Support

We will use a range of methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories, poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- use of RSHE lessons
- use of SMSC across the curriculum
- use of Life Lessons during form time
- restorative discussions.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- being listened to
- having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Year Team

- being offered continued support
- being offered counselling, where appropriate.

Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- receiving a consequence for their actions
- being able to discuss what happened
- reflecting on why they became involved
- understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- appropriate assistance from parents/carers.

Statutory Implications

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the school's:

- Behaviour policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the academy understands that it has a responsibility to 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; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or 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.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment, or intimidation and hate crimes.

Racist, Homophobic, Disability Bullying

An incident of this nature is reported to the local authority and the student may be sanctioned a Suspension or a Permanent Exclusion.

References

1. Hewitt G., Anthony R., Moore G., Melendez-Torres G.J., Murphy S. (2019) Student Health and Wellbeing In Wales: Report of the 2017/18 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey and School Health Research Network Student Health and Wellbeing Survey. Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK SHRN-HBSC-NR 31.05.2019.pdf.
2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/onlinebullyinginenlandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>.
3. [Anti-Bullying Pro \(antibullyingpro.com\)](http://antibullyingpro.com).
4. Family-School Links. How Do They Affect Educational Outcomes? *Edited By Alan Booth, Judith F. Dunn 1996.*