

## Anti-bullying

This policy also applies to EYFS pupils and children in our Nursery Provision

The School refer to, and all decisions are in line with, the following documents:

- *School Support for Children and Young People Who Are Bullied*, DfE March 2014
- *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and School Staff*, DfE November 2014
- *Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies*, DfE July 2017

### Objectives:

- Every school member's right to be safe from bullying is upheld by the actions of others.
- The school ensures that staff remain vigilant at all times and challenge any signs of child on child abuse.
- The school will adopt a **zero tolerance approach** to any physical abuse or cyber-bullying (including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and any sexual violence or harassment. Staff will report to the DSL immediately any issues of this nature. Please see the **Safeguarding Policy** for further details about how Bedford Greenacre Independent School deals with child-on-child abuse

### A definition of bullying:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time or a one off incident, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying 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. (*Preventing and Tackling Bullying, DfE 2017*).

The main types are:

1. **Physical** (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
2. **Verbal** (e.g. name calling, racism, sexism, sarcasm, rumour mongering, inappropriate teasing, homophobic remarks)
3. **Emotional** – indirectly (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups could be a one off incident)
4. **Excluding** – deliberately excluding people from friendship groups with bad intent
5. **Hurtful Behaviour** – based on prejudice against particular groups (e.g. based on race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities)
6. **Electronic/Cyber-bullying** (e.g. text messages, inappropriate images/files on electronic devices, including mobile phones)

## Seriousness

Bedford Greenacre Independent School acknowledge the potential seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and sometimes physical harm (whether inflicted or self-inflicted). Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously. Records are kept by the Deputy Heads of incidents of bullying.

In accordance with guidelines specified in *Keeping Children Safe in Education-Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges* (September 2023), child-on-child bullying is recognised as abuse. Following the procedures in our Safeguarding Policy, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL) must be informed. All children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, must be considered as being at risk.

The DSL/Deputy DSL will act in accordance with the procedures stated in the Safeguarding Policy. Staff are aware that children with SEND may be particularly vulnerable.

## BULLYING

### Rationale:

“It is a basic entitlement of all children and young people in the U.K. that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse”. (Tatum & Herbert 1990).

Every member of the school community has a number of basic rights, which will enable them to achieve their full potential, and which the whole school is responsible for supporting and defending.

Each class is encouraged to discuss and understand these rights and responsibilities. The following statements are typical of how a class contract might express these rights.

- We each have a right ..... to be treated with respect and kindness. This means that nobody will laugh at me, ignore me, or hurt my feelings.
- We each have a right ..... to be an individual in this school. This means that nobody will treat me unfairly because I am a boy or a girl, fat or thin, fast or slow or because of my interests or beliefs.
- We each have a right ..... to be safe in this school. This means I can expect that no one will hit me, kick me, push me, taunt me with words or hurt me in any way.
- We each have a right ..... to be valued and respected for our individual strengths.

### Values

“Bullying is an anti-social behaviour resorted to by inadequate people, and we must respond in a way which will be helpful to their learning of improved behaviour. Increasing their anxiety and alienation from us is not likely to work”. Maines, B. and Robinson, G. – ‘No Blame Approach’ 1992.

A bully may be described as:

A person or group behaving in a way that might meet the needs for excitement, status, material-gain or group process and does not recognise or meet the needs and rights of the other people/person who are harmed by the behaviour.

Bullying behaviour may include:

- Physical violence.
- Threat of physical harm.
- Name calling or teasing. ‘Banter’ which undermines, threatens and frightens a person is not tolerated and will be recorded as a bullying incident. Could be a one off incident.
- Extortion – demand for money or favours.
- Exclusion – leaving someone out of group activities.

A victim may be described as:

A person that is harmed by the behaviour of others and who does not have the resources, status, skill or ability to counteract or stop the harmful behaviour.

**Aims:**

- To address and change bullying behaviour.
- To protect pupils from being bullied.
- To raise staff and pupil awareness of what constitutes the various forms of bullying.
- To raise staff and pupil awareness of procedures and support available for both the bully and the victim.
- To deal with incidents of bullying by using the “No blame approach” where appropriate.

**Guidelines:**

The school endeavours to provide a safe, secure, happy learning environment for all pupils. The following measures are implemented in order to tackle the occurrence of bullying within the school:

- Effective supervision of the school environment.
- Visible reminders around the school to promote anti-bullying measures.
- Pupils are made aware that the school cares about bullying and will take reports of bullying seriously by responding to reported incidents as soon as possible.
- The pupils are encouraged to talk to staff and break down the code of secrecy.
- Children are provided with decision-making and assertiveness skills.
- Pupils are given positive strategies to deal with bullying, particularly in PSHE lessons.
- Parents are made aware that the school acts to prevent bullying and deals with bullying incidents.
- If bullying is reported to a member of staff, they should assess the seriousness of the incident and, for the majority of cases, inform the victim’s form tutor, who will follow the under-mentioned process, linked with the school’s Behaviour Policy. In some cases where bullying has occurred across year groups it may be necessary to involve more than one form tutor or a more senior member of the staff.
- We consider the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour);
- No one approach will be successful for every incident, but in the first case “The Common Concern Approach/No Blame Approach” should be undertaken.
- By telling the group how the victim feels, the aim is to elicit from the group an empathetic response. The focus should be upon the feelings and status of the bully. He/she should be given the opportunity to acknowledge that there is a problem, to understand the degree of distress suffered and to feel that his/her ability to change his/her behaviour is recognised.

## PROCESS

### *Procedures to follow*

Any school member, whether a child or an adult, has the right not to be bullied and are actively encouraged to tell someone who will be in a position to end the bullying. For a child that person might be their form teacher or any teacher they prefer, a Prefect, a Peer, Mentor, a trusted friend, a Deputy Head or the Principal. They are also encouraged to tell their parents and/or family. A parent or family member has a duty to inform the school of accusations of bullying behaviour so that the school can investigate.

The DSL/Deputy DSL will be informed and will follow the procedures stated in the Safeguarding Policy.

Any adult experiencing bullying is encouraged to tell a colleague, manager or Governor or any member of the community who might be in a position to help.

### *Investigation and recording*

Where bullying is reported an accurate written record of events and facts is kept. The school will interview all parties concerned to establish the facts and action against a bully will only be taken when they are established. Teachers recording incidents will take contemporaneous notes, quote verbatim where possible and finally write up a report. Notes and reports will be filed and archived.



<b>The Victim/Victims</b>	<b>The Bully/Bullies</b>
<p><i>Talk to victim to establish how they feel, how long they have felt this way and who has caused these negative feelings. An incident form is kept by HOS and may be helpful in eliciting details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do not try to establish facts about the incident.</i></li> <li>• <i>If you deem the pupil able to confront the bully to discuss their feelings, support them.</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage the pupil to (a) ask a bully to stop; (b) explain to the bully how they are feeling; (c) walk away, do not fight or verbally retaliate with abuse; (d) ask to meet with the pupil one week later to assess situation.</i></li> <li>• <i>One-to-one discussion. Explain to the victim that you would like to meet with the bully/ies to repair the situation through a non-blame approach. Arrange a meeting with the victim a week later.</i></li> <li>• <i>If no satisfactory conclusion can be reached or the incident is sufficiently severe, the following processes should be undertaken:</i></li> <li>• <i>Referral to Deputy Head/Member of SLT/DSL/Deputy DSL. Revisit 'No Blame' approach.</i></li> <li>• <i>Involvement of Deputy/Principal and possibly parents. Talk about how the bully has to change to make his/her behaviour acceptable. If behaviour continues, the bully must be made aware of school sanctions.</i></li> <li>• <i>It is essential that all incidents of bullying are recorded by the form tutor. Where deemed necessary by the Tutor this may entail the use of a report slip.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No contact with bully/ies at this stage.</i></li> <li>• <i>Meet with the bully/ies plus a couple of bystanders (if they watch they are complicit in the bullying) or 'non-involved' pupils.</i></li> <li>• <i>Non-blameful opening. Explain how the victim feels.</i></li> <li>• <i>To enable patterns to be identified and agree that it has happened.</i></li> <li>• <i>"We will move on. Let's solve the problem". What do you suggest?</i></li> <li>• <i>I trust you to go ahead now.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Key points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Criticise action and not the person.</i></li> <li>• <i>Leave open opportunity for pupil to apologise or redeem relationship.</i></li> <li>• <i>Establish clear targets.</i></li> </ul>



### *Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluation Process*

- Report slips will be kept by HOS in order to establish any patterns of bullies/victims.
- Regular reviews of the content of the bullying programme are in place.

### *Staff Training*

- Whole school involvement on developments/amendments to Policy.
- Whole school Safeguarding training
- Ongoing training on using Circle Time to develop self-esteem and cover theme of bullying.
- Whole school training on 'No Blame Approach' to bullying.
- How to deal with potential suicide/Signs of emotional problems.

### *Staff awareness raising and training*

Staff awareness of bullying is raised through twice-weekly briefings at which children's pastoral welfare is discussed and incidents shared. All staff are required to remain constantly alert to bullying and the need to reduce the risk of it arising. They pay particular attention to times and locations where bullying might be more prevalent, such as break times and trips. Staff failing to deal with an incident appropriately will be required to undergo further training.

### *Promoting an anti-bullying ethos educating pupils on bullying*

The school promotes our anti-bullying policy (which is published on the school website) through teacher and pupil-led assemblies, through its publicised behaviour policy, through schemes of work in PSHE throughout the school, through form time and form teachers, through the School Council, through the peer mentor system, and by precedent. Bullying and conflict often arise from 'play fighting' and jocular verbal abuse - both these forms of behaviour are not allowed at Bedford Greenacre Independent School. Staff and older pupils set examples in the school for others to follow.

### *Support and sanctions*

The school will employ a range of strategies to ensure that the victim is supported and protected in the future and that the bully/bullies fully understand the hurtful and damaging nature of their actions. The school may require the bully to sign a behaviour contract. Punishments may be applied if appropriate and may be serious, including temporary suspension and permanent exclusion.

Parents of the victim and bully/bullies will be informed and the school will work with the families to ensure that bullying behaviour is not repeated. The school behaviour policy highlights that bullying will not be tolerated at Bedford Greenacre Independent School. The small school environment is conducive to ensuring this does not happen.

## **Appendix 1A**

Indications of those at risk from bullying may include:

- Lack of friends.
- Isolation.
- Poor communication and/or poor co-ordination.
- Unusual physical characteristics.
- Volatile, sulky or tearful behaviour.
- Inexplicable behaviour.
- Chooses to stay with adults.
- Illness and absenteeism.
- Lateness.
- Unpopular families.
- Accents or racial differences.
- Vulnerability through Special Educational Needs and Child Protection issues.

## **Appendix 1B**

Signs that may signify that a student is being bullied include:

- Being frightened of walking to and from school.
- Being unwilling to come to school.
- Beginning to do poorly in school work.
- Displaying personality changes.
- Complaining of feeling unwell (frequently).
- Having unexplained bruises and injuries.
- Having possessions destroyed or go missing.
- Showing reluctance to go into the playground.
- Refusing to say what is wrong, or giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above.