

BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL

WORSLEY, MANCHESTER

M28 2WQ

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR ANTI-BULLYING

SCOPE: This policy covers all pupils attending Bridgewater School, including those in EYFS and any using the school's Early and Late Clubs. In order to address all our pupils' needs, separate procedures may be appropriate for EYFS, Prep or Senior children. Where this is the case, the relevant procedure is attached.

This policy includes:

- bullying of pupils by pupils within school
- bullying of and/or by pupils outside school, where the school is aware of it
- bullying of staff by pupils within or outside school

Allegations about bullying of pupils by staff will be dealt with under the school's Safeguarding Policy.

This policy has links to the following school policies and procedures:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour, Discipline, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (internet safety)
- Safeguarding (child protection) Policy
- Complaints procedure
- Cyberbullying Policy

This policy is directed by the DfE guidance – KCSIE (September 2024), 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017' and also by the guidance provided in 'Cyberbullying : Advice for Head Teachers and School Staff, November 2014' as well as 'Supporting Children and Young People Who Are Bullied: Advice For Schools (2014)'.

Principles and Aims

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify that bullying is always unacceptable within our school community. It can cause suffering and harm leading to potentially devastating consequences. This document reflects our commitment to encouraging a school where individuality is celebrated and pupils can flourish. Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy at Bridgewater School. This policy will ensure there is a clear procedure for staff,

pupils and parents to follow once a perceived incident of bullying has been reported and to ensure an appropriate response.

We uphold the principles that we have:

- An environment where every pupil feels safe and respected and where every pupil treats others with respect and consideration.
- An open culture where pupils trust adults and where difficulties can be aired and solved together.
- A culture in which everyone, adults and pupils, shares the responsibility to prevent, reveal and heal bullying.
- A culture where all abuse allegations will be taken seriously and abuse will not be tolerated or excused as part of growing up or as “banter”.

What is bullying? Definition

- DfE Guidance defines bullying as “Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. However, it should be recognised that, on occasion, bullying can be a single event rather than something that occurs just over a long period.
- Bullying is not impolite, ignorant or loutish behaviour. It is not an accident, error of judgment, insensitive phrasing or a difference of view. It is not a difference between equals or people who dislike each other.
- Bullying intends to damage and undermine. **It is the deliberate and conscious physical, emotional or psychological hurting of another human being**, the intimidation, belittling, threatening, silencing or isolation of someone else. It is usually but not always a repeated pattern of behaviour.
- Bullying is defined as any behavior – spoken, psychological, electronic or physical – directed towards another that intentionally physically or emotionally hurts another pupil and prevents them from living at ease with other members of the school. It is often prejudiced against particular groups and includes: *harassment, mental cruelty, victimisation, sexual/sexist and racial abuse, homophobic comments, comments about gender reassignment, vandalism, criminal damage including graffiti, assault, extortion, religious discrimination, cultural discrimination, gossiping or spreading rumours, isolating people, cyber bullying (see separate cyber-bullying policy), including via social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, e-mails and discrimination against those with special educational needs and disability.*
- Certain characteristics are regarded as protected under the law. These include age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Any bullying based on these characteristics is against the law and will be treated seriously.
- A group behaving badly towards a person is in grave danger of bullying.
- Bullying can involve using a third party to tease or torment someone and can involve complicity (being a ‘bystander’).
- Some manipulative people lie and falsely accuse others of misdeeds including bullying. This is a form of bullying and will be treated as such.
- Bullying can occur both online and in person – see Cyberbullying Policy.

We oppose bullying in all its forms

We believe that everyone has the right to be safe. Bullying is totally unacceptable in our school. It undermines everything for which we stand.

Bullying hurts the victim, makes him or her feel unsafe, powerless and unable to be him or herself. In a school context, it prevents that person learning.

It makes witnesses anxious and harms the bully. It is a destructive influence on the happiness and development of those involved, whether directly or indirectly.

It is wrong and dangerous for anyone to accept any aspect of bullying as a part of growing up or to suggest that it can be solved by similar methods.

We expect everyone to take responsibility for solving such situations. Bullying can only thrive when people keep silent.

For serious or persistent bullying, we will permanently exclude a bully.

Where we suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the incident will be addressed as a Child Protection concern under the Children Act 1989 and the matter reported to the local authority.

We will remain alert to forms of initiation type bullying and child-on-child abuse.

We will take action in response to any incidence of bullying even where this may be the first occasion.

Those involved

- **The bully** does not conform to a stereotype. He or she can come from any social, racial, religious or cultural background and can be any age or size. A bully may be or have been a victim of bullying.
- People under pressure can forget their values and become bullies – perhaps for a short time.
- Some individuals become insensitive and cruel under cover of a group.
- Some individuals become insensitive and cruel under pressure from a group.
- **The victim** does not conform to a stereotype. Anyone can be a possible target of bullying, there is no pattern. A child who is already lonely, withdrawn, and insecure or suffering a temporary sadness is probably most at risk but those who are blessed with intelligence, good looks, and popularity can also be targets.
- **A victim suffers** – often feeling afraid, powerless and unsafe, unhappy, alone, devalued and hopeless.
- No one deserves to be bullied; no conduct excuses bullying.

What to look for – signs of bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with school policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, MOST people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

School General Preventative Strategies

Sharing our ethos

- As role models, we demonstrate good manners and respect for the individual.
- We oppose the notion that any child deserves to be bullied.
- We strive to treat all children fairly.
- Our school rules emphasise respect for the individual.
- We make clear our opposition to bullying through assemblies, PSHCE, form periods etc.
- We make clear our consequences in this school.
- We make it clear to our pupils that their silence on this issue supports the bully.
- Close relationships between form teacher/class teacher and the pupils ensure that issues are raised and discussed.
- Internet security, filtering and ICT education ensure issues of cyberbullying are raised and discussed with pupils.

Communication

- Induction Evenings and packs - where our stance on bullying is laid out
- We advise parents on what to do in *The Parents' Handbook*
- We have a clear **Anti-Bullying Procedure** for all staff, teaching and non-teaching, which is incorporated in this policy. In the Prep, it is located in the handbook under Behaviour, Discipline, Rewards and Sanctions.

PREP ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

Staff need to be vigilant in dealing with any matters or occurrences of this kind of anti-social behaviour, as it is neither accepted nor tolerated at Bridgewater School.

Younger children often confuse bullying with 'falling out' with friends or with 'one-off' incidents in the playground. Although such problems need to be resolved, they do not constitute bullying. Bullying should be taken to mean premeditated actions to cause hurt or distress to another. In dealing with suspected bullying, staff should take care, as far as possible, to elicit the exact details of the incident before determining whether or not bullying has taken place.

Bullying can take a variety of forms: physical attacks, name-calling, threatening behaviour, taunts, interfering with friendships or making children's differences a point of fun.

After such disputes, children should be encouraged to make up and see the error of their ways. If this is not possible, they should be made to understand the consequences of their actions and teachers should look for ways of minimising the effect of further confrontation. The Deputy with responsibility for Prep should be informed of continuing disputes. He will then take discipline or pastoral action appropriate to the individual case. He may also refer the matter to the Head Teacher and relevant parents.

SENIOR ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

The school recognises that its response to bullying involves more than policies for intervention. There are clear lines of communication between form teachers, pastoral coordinators and the SLT to ensure intelligence about pupils is shared.

Observation and Intervention

- We encourage Year 7 pupils to sit with different partners and to join societies.
- We observe our pupils carefully, especially anyone "new" to the school and we 'buddy' them with established members of our community.
- We take care in making and handing on our records to new settings.
- In duty teams, we keep a look out for conflict and patrol potential 'hotspots'.

Pastoral care and education

- We encourage our pupils to see their Form Teacher as a guide and mentor.
- We encourage courtesy.
- We reward positive behaviour.
- We strive to develop self-esteem in our pupils.
- We encourage discussion in form time and PHSCE.
- We take pupil views on this issue as well as others

What to do.

All members of staff are expected to be vigilant in ensuring that instances of bullying are dealt with as soon as they are witnessed or reported. Suspected bullying must never be ignored. The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise:

If you are the victim

- If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.
- Share your feelings with someone else.
- If possible, talk to a member of Staff, your Form Tutor, a Pastoral Coordinator or the Deputy Head about the incident. Prep School pupils may have a particular teacher

they feel most comfortable talking to. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can.

- Childline: **0800 1111**

Procedure if a pupil should witness bullying behaviour

- Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
- Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
- Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Pastoral Co-coordinator or Form Tutor on their behalf.

Procedure for members of Staff should you witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you

If you are told that a pupil believes he or she is being bullied, it is important that, even if you feel they are being hypersensitive, you treat the matter seriously or he or she will feel undermined and isolated.

- If witnessed, bullying must be challenged and dealt with immediately and the episode reported to a pastoral coordinator or one of the Deputy Heads.
- If the issue is reported to you, do not promise confidentiality
- Listen carefully.
- Take clear notes as soon as possible and record the details in your logbook.
- Reassure him or her that no one deserves to be bullied.
- Reassure him or her that telling an adult is the right thing to do.
- Let him or her know that you will discuss this with someone else.
- Help to investigate this further if asked.
- Assure them nothing will happen without their prior knowledge.
- Reassure and support the pupils involved.
- Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of the pastoral team. (Form Tutor, Pastoral Coordinator, Deputy Head).

Inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. Pastoral Staff must record all incidents of reported bullying and ensure that the Deputy Head is informed. The Deputy Head will keep a central log of all complaints or incidents of bullying and record the way in which they were dealt. The Deputy Head and Pastoral Coordinator will check all incidents to enable patterns to be identified. The form teacher/pastoral coordinator will decide on the strategies for monitoring, empowering and supporting those who have been bullied and the strategies to support and punish those who have been bullying. They will inform staff.

The school recognises that some forms of bullying are a form of child-on-child abuse and as such may be treated as a safeguarding issue where appropriate.

These are matters needing fairness, sensitivity and judgment and should not be done alone or without discussion with the victim.

Recent trends have included the inappropriate use of mobile telephones and internet access to cause harm to other pupils. The school policies on the use of mobile telephones and computer access aims to address these issues, as does the separate Cyberbullying Policy.

Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allow a school to discipline pupils for conduct when they are not on school premises. This includes incidents of bullying. The Head Teacher may deem such incidents appropriate to report to the police or local authority and where criminal incidents occur, the police will always be contacted.

What will happen?

The victim will be interviewed by their Form Tutor or Pastoral Coordinator on their own and be asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Once the tutor or Pastoral Coordinator is clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

Details of the incident will be recorded on the anti-bullying log and on individual files. The Deputy Head is copied in so that it can be recorded as a bullying incident. The pastoral team will decide on an appropriate course of action. In the first instance, the Form Teacher or Pastoral Coordinator will interview the pupil or pupils whose behaviour has caused distress and give him/them a formal bullying warning; making it clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered to be further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support will be offered. A suitable punishment will also be given, which may include a lunchtime detention

If the Pastoral Coordinator decides it is appropriate, the Deputy Head will become involved and the parents of the perpetrator/s will be informed by letter or telephone. The following sanctions may be applied in accordance with the **School Behavioural Policy**.

- **Formal School Warning from the Deputy Head.** The Deputy Head will speak to the pupils involved and will contact the parents or guardians giving details of the offence and inviting them in to School to discuss the matter and to be present when their child is given a Formal School Warning. Their support for the School's actions should be enlisted if possible.
- An after school or Saturday detention will be given depending on the severity of the issue.
- **Suspension** at the Head Teacher's discretion (see the School's Suspension and Exclusion Policy).
- **Exclusion** at the Head Teacher's discretion (see the School's Suspension and Exclusion Policy).
- **Police Involvement**

These are minimum sanctions. In very serious cases, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the School to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

The School will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. Anti-bullying training is raised annually at the start of the school year along with Child Protection matters. The key points from this policy will be discussed with pupils during form periods and PHSCE lessons. It will also be reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education.

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by form tutors and Pastoral Coordinators, to monitor that the problem has been resolved. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Pastoral teams regularly at meetings to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

We are absolutely confident that the vast majority of our pupils will agree with our sentiments on bullying. It is our intention to identify and take action against those who do not.

Raising Awareness with Pupils/Staff

The school raises anti-bullying awareness with pupils through its PSHE programme, assemblies, form tutor time, drama, literature and so on. There are also scheduled sessions on anti-bullying during the school year. Posters highlighting the contact details of various agencies are displayed in prominent positions around the school.

The school will also seek to raise awareness with staff to signs of bullying particularly in places where it is likely to happen e.g. cloakrooms, corridors, and at break times etc. Staff on duty will be made aware of any particular issues. Staff will also be given regular training on anti-bullying issues.

References

DCSF Safe to Learn, *Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*.

DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017.

National Minimum Standards.

www.cyberbullying.org

Cyberbullying: advice for head teachers and school staff, November 2014

Supporting Children and Young People Who Are Bullied – Advice for Schools (2014)

Reviewed by the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team – February 2026