

Anti – Bullying Policy

Aims

The aim of this policy is to try to prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying. We are committed to ensuring that the school community works together to create a happy, safe, caring and stimulating environment. We believe that bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. We believe that where bullying is challenged effectively pupils will feel safe and happy and we will demonstrate a school that cares. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. However, we acknowledge that bullying can and does happen from time to time. When bullying does occur, everyone should feel able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our school anti-bullying policy.

The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the school community have the responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy.

Definition

In The Bridge School we define bullying as follows:

Bullying is when an individual or group **deliberately** hurts another or makes them feel unhappy. Bullying behaviour will be repeated over a period of time and is difficult for the victim to defend against. Bullying may be **racist, sexist, or homophobic**. People can be bullied for any reason; because of the way they look, because of their religion, their age, because of a learning or physical disability for example.

Whatever the reason, bullying is never acceptable and will not be tolerated in The Bridge School.

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are (Please see Appendix 1 for more details):

Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, demanding money or belongings.

Verbal – name calling, insults making racist, sexist, homophobic or offensive remarks.

Emotional - producing offensive graffiti, excluding people from groups, spreading hurtful and untrue rumours, being forced to do things against own will and taking belongings or money

Cyber bullying – offensive or abusive emails, text messages or posts on websites – known as ‘cyber bullying’. We believe that bullying someone by email or text messages is still hurtful and will be dealt with in the same manner. This includes harmful content on social media platforms.

Students sometimes fall out and say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, although unkind, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a student's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns or a student prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop skills to repair relationships. Some pupils or students may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination.

Within The Bridge SEN School we want:

All young people to feel safe to learn, and enjoy the company of others.

All young people and adults to be treated fairly, with respect and dignity.

Everyone to listen carefully to what learners have to say and treat all accounts with due seriousness.

The school will set about doing this the following ways:

- The school will meet the legal requirements for all schools to have an anti-bullying policy in place.
- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that student stay safe as stated in the [Children's Act 1989](#), the [SEN and Disability Act 2001](#), the [Government Green Paper 'Every Student Matters' 2003](#) (outcome 2) and [The Children Act 2004](#).
- All teaching and non teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will know what the school policy is on bullying. Students and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Whole school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc) and proactive teaching strategies (PSHE lessons, circle time etc) will be used throughout the school to reduce opportunities for bullying to occur.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work and express themselves free from fear of being bullied.
- British values as defined by the government including a tolerance of others and respect of free speech will be embedded in the school curriculum and encouraged to be implemented

Signs and Symptoms of bullying

A student may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied. Evidence from research confirms that disabled students are particularly vulnerable to abuse and/or neglect. Adults should be aware of these signs and investigate further if a student with special needs:

- Is acting depressed, lonely, and anxious;
- Is more agitated or aggressive than previously
- Has low self-esteem;
- Experiences headaches, stomach aches, tiredness, and poor eating;
- Is absent from school, dislikes school, and has poorer school performance; and
- Expresses inclination to self harm or suicide

NB this is not a definitive list but suggests some of the signs and symptoms. These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

What action will take place if a student is being bullied?

We want everybody to feel confident to report bullying whenever and wherever it happens, and get the help they need to feel safe again. If someone is bullying another student, it is important to assure that it is not their fault and there are people that can help them. When listening to a learner gather as many facts as you can (Who? Where? What? Why? When? How?). All pupils know that if they are experiencing bullying they should tell their teacher in the first instance. Should a pupil not feel confident in doing this, or be physically unable, the teaching team should work together to determine the situation and make a judgement about what action to take.

Strategies in school for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing opportunities for bullying to occur. These include:

- Each class agrees on their own set of class rules.
- Awareness of bullying behaviour is raised through assemblies, work in PSHE/SEAL lessons and circle time discussions.
- Using drama and role-play activities to help learners be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations.
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour.
- Involving parents and the wider community.
- Multi agency work – working with social services, police etc.

Procedures for reporting and dealing with bullying incidents

At The Bridge SEN School a whole school approach is adopted to deal with bullies. All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying. They will be taken seriously and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all those involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved.

The following step by step procedures will be followed in all cases:

- Initially, staff will listen and speak to all learners involved about the incident separately.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An alleged bullying form (appendix 2) will be completed ● The case will be investigated and if it transpires the alleged behaviour is confirmed a Confirmation of Bullying form (appendix 3 will be completed ● Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour. ● Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim. ● Staff will reinforce to the bully/ies that their behaviour is unacceptable and they will be given a warning. The bully/ies will be asked to genuinely apologise for what they have done. It is possible that certain learners may not realise their behaviour is distressing to others, so it is important staff and parents and guardians reinforce the idea that such behaviour is not acceptable. ● Work will be done with the bully/ies to help him/her/them understand and change his/her/their behaviour, including investigating the underlying reasons as to why they are bullying. ● In serious cases e.g. when threatening behaviour is involved, parents will be informed and invited into the school to discuss the problem. This meeting will be with the class teacher and/or Academic Manager and Director present. In very serious cases the police may be involved and the local authorities may be contacted. The director and the staff involved will use their discretion about such actions. ● After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. The 'target' will be given support and this will be monitored using a Support for Bullied Learner form (appendix 4) one month, two months and six months after the incident. ● Should the bullying continue the Academic Manager and the Director may make the decision to suggest homeschooling for the learner. ● Appropriate records will be kept of all incidents. 	
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Please see our Challenging Student's Policy for more information about challenging students. The parents or guardian of the learner have the right to appeal to the Governing Body and the LEA.

Confidentiality

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a learner for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils. Correct procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made. Staff must make a careful judgement whether or not a third party needs to be informed. This judgement will be based upon:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the pupil may be experiencing.
- The learner's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Where it is clear that a learner would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek consent of the pupil to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the learner. Unless clearly inappropriate, learners will always be encouraged to talk to their parents/guardians. An underlying principle in supporting learners in The Bridge SEN School is that all learners are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of bullying will be taken seriously.

Race Equality/Inclusion Statement

	<p>The policies, system and practices at The Bridge School set out to promote community cohesion and to provide a high quality educational experience for all students. At The Bridge School we do not tolerate any form of racism, bullying or harassment. Staff aim to maximise the potential of all our pupils through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Setting suitable learning challenges ● Responding to student’s diverse needs ● Overcoming potential barriers to learning <p>We recognise that it is the responsibility of the entire school community to seek to provide equality of opportunity for all our students regardless of culture, language, religion, ethnicity, ability, disability, gender, sexuality or social circumstance.</p> <p>Safeguarding Young People</p> <p>Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection 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 local authority children’s social care. 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 doing the bullying.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of the policy</p> <p>To ensure the policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated. The academic manager is responsible for amending the policy as necessary and takes into account the reports of teachers and other member of staff.</p>	
Updated January 2023	Next update scheduled for January 2024	

Appendix 1

Specific Examples of Bullying

Racist bullying – an incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. This can be in the form of:

- verbal abuse, name calling, racist jokes, offensive mimicry
- physical threats or attacks
- wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- inciting others to behave in a racist way
- racist graffiti or other written insults, even against food, music, dress or customs
- refusing to co-operate in work or play.

Sexual bullying – this is generally characterised by:

- abusive name calling
- looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- inappropriate and uninvited touching
- sexual innuendos and propositions
- pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- in it's most extreme form, sexual assault or rape.

Sexual orientation – this can happen even if the pupils are not lesbian, gay or bisexual. Just being different can be enough. This can be in the form of:

- use of homophobic language
- looks and comments about sexual orientation or appearance.

SEN or disability – These pupils are often at greater risk of bullying.

This can be characterised by:

- name calling
- comments on appearance
- comments with regard to perceived ability and achievement levels.

The need for adult sensitivity should be taken into account in a number of instances, e.g. when grouping children, marking children's work, sharing of results and assessment arrangements as well as an awareness of appropriate language being used when addressing pupils.

Text Bullying – Pupils receiving threatening or disturbing messages from possibly anonymous callers.

On very rare occasions where this is necessary on occasions, the pupils leave their phone in the office and need written permission from their parent/carer.) It is likely that a growing number of children will be using mobile phones out of school.

Cyber Bullying – Children receiving abusive messages or images via email or social networking sites. Within school children have restricted access to both of these.

Appendix 2

Bullying Allegation Form

Completed by:		
Position:		
Date:		
How was the referral given:		
Name of learner experiencing bullying behaviour:		
Name of learner alleged to be engaged in bullying behaviour:		
Report account:		
Action taken:		
	Checked for earlier incidents involving same pupils	Notified class teacher
	Individual discussions with pupils involved	Group discussion with pupils involved
	Discussion of incident with peers/class	Restorative intervention
	On-going support/monitoring from staff	Details of action agreed with learner or learner's primary carer
	Applied sanctions	Parent letter/meeting
Focus of bullying		
	Definitely applies	Possibly applies
Age/Maturity		
Appearance		
Size/weight		
Class/Socio-economic		
Family circumstance		
Ethnicity/Race		
Religion/Belief		
Gender		
Transphobia/Gender identity		
Homophobia/sexuality		
Sexualised		
SEN and Disability		
Ability/application		
Additional action taken:		
Details of support given:		

	Counselling		Peer support	Referral to external agencies
	None offered		None – offered but refused	Referral to CAHMA
Was bullying confirmed?	Yes*	No	Insufficient evidence	
*If yes, please complete a Confirmed case of bullying form				
Continued report account				
Additional details gathered to date:				
Additional action taken to date:				

Confirmation of Bullying Form

Name of learner experiencing bullying:	
Name of learner(s) engaging in bullying	

Focus of Bullying behaviour		
	Definitely applies	Possibly applies
Age/Maturity		
Appearance		
Size/weight		
Class/Socio-economic		
Family circumstance		
Ethnicity/Race		
Religion/Belief		
Gender		
Transphobia/Gender identity		
Homophobia/sexuality		
Sexualised		
SEN and Disability		
Ability/application		

Manifestation of Bullying behaviour	
Perception of individual: feelings of being bullied/harassed/isolated/ignored	
Teasing	
General expressions of prejudice/stereotype	
Racist literature, graffiti or insignia	
Verbal abuse or name calling	
Targeted graffiti or hurtful note writing	
Threats including physical assault	
Texts message bullying/harassment	

Internet related bullying/harassment	
Camera phone bullying/harassment	
Actual physical assault	
Other:	

Description of incident(s):
Action taken:

Summary of Those Informed		
Director		
Chair of Governors		
Class Teacher		
Academic Manager		
'Target's' parents or carers notified		
'Target's' parents or carers invited to the school		
'Offender's' parents or carers notified		
'Offender's' parents or carers invited to the school		
CAF Initiated		
Local Authority informed		
Police		
Other		
Continued report account		
Additional details gathered to date:		
Additional action taken to date:		

Appendix 4

Support for Bullied Learner

Support Provided:

Has the relationship been repaired?

Has achievement to learn been affected?

Has there been a change in the pattern of attendance?

Any change in social issues?

Any change in mental or emotional state?

How was the partnership with parents/carers?

Does the 'target' feel safe at school?

Does the 'target' feel safe on journeys to and from school?

Does the 'target' feel safe while online?

Name of staff member completing this form:

Date: