

BRUERN ABBEY SCHOOL

Anti – Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all pupils in the school

The logo for Bellevue, featuring the word "bellevue" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters "bel" are blue, and "levue" are pink.

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Annual review

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BRUERN ABBEY SCHOOL Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has regard to the updated DfE guidance '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying*' (July 2017) and the '*Supporting Bullied Children*' factsheet (October 2014). It draws on the 2019 DfE guidance on the Independent Schools Standards and also the previous guidance, '*Safe to Learn - Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools*' and considers the recommendations in the OFSTED Review of sexual abuse in schools and college (June 2021).

In relation to cyberbullying, the policy takes note of the DfE guidance: '*Cyberbullying: advice for Headmasters and school staff (2014)*' and '*Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014)*'.

In relation to online safety, reference should also be made to the school's e-safety policy, to be found as part of the safeguarding policy.

"It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective."

D P Tattum

I. Aims

The overall aims of this policy are the prevention of bullying and, should instances of bullying occur, to help staff and pupils to deal with it effectively.

In this respect, the school seeks:

- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school, and their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's behaviour policy
- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular staff training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying
- To provide a consistent school response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents
- To provide support for both victim and bully

2. Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various different forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion.
- Sexual/sexist - behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. It is any behaviour which degrades someone, singles someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance. Sexual bullying is also pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable.
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation
- Special Needs or Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- Because a child is adopted or a carer
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, online sexual harassment, sending of unwanted photographs or asking for/pressurising others to do so. (Please refer to separate section, below.)

These forms of bullying reflect the 'protected characteristics' as defined in the 2010 Equality Act. These are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. The school works with its pupils to develop a sense of respect and tolerance towards those with a protected characteristic and thus guard against bullying in relation to such characteristics.

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

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

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has prep which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries himself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has tuck money or other money continually “lost”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

4. Action against Bullying

It is essential that all adults in the school community know what to do when they suspect that a child is being bullied and which member of staff to contact. Whether bullying occurs in school, out of school or on-line, staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above.

- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate.
- Use of the school curriculum, for example in subjects such as PSHEE (S.T.O.P.) and Life Skills, drama, English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- Development of the RSHE curriculum in order to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in relationships and in regard to sexual and homophobic bullying and harassment, and how to deal with these if they encounter them
- Use, as above, of other elements of school life, including assemblies, chapel services, form periods, house meetings, school council and visiting speakers.
- Use, as above, of focussed projects and focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet.
- Availability of this policy on the school's website to enable parents to understand the school's approach and work together with staff.
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully.
- Where appropriate and following discussion with the Headmaster, engagement with outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping children who bully others.
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision of changing and showering areas, monitoring the use of washrooms and cloakrooms at break times, visibility of staff in boarding time and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff.
- A good proportion of games lessons and other physical activity to enable pupils to burn off energy and aggression.
- Use of the house system as part of the school's pastoral care to encourage vertical bonding between age groups, giving older pupils a sense of responsibility and younger children a chance to externalise feelings and anxieties that they may not share with an adult member of staff or even their own family.
- All children given the opportunity to speak to their tutor or a member of the boarding staff. This person is someone they feel comfortable with, who knows the child well and understands that the child may turn to him or her. Where it is recognised that a child may not be comfortable turning to his form teacher or tutor, alternative arrangements will be put in place.
- Familiarity of all staff with this policy; staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy.
- Through staff training and by regular discussion at whole staff and boarding meetings, raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying, how to prevent it, what action to take to resolve problems, and developing an understanding of the legal responsibilities and the sources of support available.
- Dove-tailing this policy with the school behaviour policy so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions.

- Where appropriate, training in, or drawing on, external expertise in specialist skills to understand pupils' specific needs, for example to assist staff in being vigilant and in taking appropriate action in relation to the vulnerability to bullying of pupils with SEND.

5. Cyberbullying

The school is conscious of the dangers of cyber-bullying, in relation to both safeguarding and anti-bullying strategies. A range of measures is set in place to guard against it. The school's firewall and filtering systems are organised and monitored to ensure, so far as is possible, that pupils are protected from inappropriate content, including extremist materials and those designed to radicalise. The school recognises that no filtering system is perfect and, in their ICT, PSHEE and Life Skills lessons, pupils learn the steps they should take, should they encounter inappropriate content. The school also recognises that systems can only protect the pupils whilst using school equipment in school. In their ICT, PSHEE and Life Skills lessons they therefore learn about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and how to keep themselves safe whilst online away from the school premises. This includes the development of their resilience to resist radicalisation and how to protect themselves and take action if they encounter other forms of online bullying and harassment, including sexual bullying. Similarly, the school provides information for parents and periodically runs workshops to enable them to gain a greater understanding of how they can help to keep their children safe online at home.

In their ICT and PSHEE lessons, through assemblies, chapel services and tutor time, pupils also learn at an age-appropriate stage about the dangers of cyber-bullying via technology, for example through mobile phones, email, social networks, text messaging and photography. They are given guidance on how to resist and report such approaches, including exercising prudence in the use of personal information on social networking sites.

Further information can be found in the school's e-safety policy, which can be found as a section of the safeguarding policy.

6. The Subtle Bully, Social Bullying, and Covert Bullying

Please refer to APPENDIX I.

7. Procedures to Follow

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

The Role of the Headmaster

The Headmaster will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged centrally on the School MIS. The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of a school bullying log and reporting on a termly basis via the Head's Report to governance. The Headmaster will then collaborate with the Head of Pastoral Care in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take by the Headmaster or Head of Pastoral Care.

The Headmaster will ensure that the Head of Pastoral Care and all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

The Role of the Head of Pastoral Care

The main roles of the Head of Pastoral Care in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Liaison with the Headmaster and between all parties involved, including parents.
- Ensuring that reports of any incident are completed and emailed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the School MIS.
- On a regular basis, analysis of incidents on the School MIS so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice.
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life (as highlighted in 4, above).
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour and support them in doing so.
- Endeavour to create a culture where pupils feel confident in coming forward to report incidences of bullying including those of a sexual nature

The Head of Pastoral Care will be fully briefed by the Headmaster, who will ensure that he or she receives appropriate training, guidance and information.

The Role of the Staff

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy. They must sign to confirm this.
- Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date.
- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered from bullying.
- All staff should be vigilant and open to the possibility of bullying occurring in the school and should avoid an attitude that is dismissive or suggests that "it doesn't happen here".

In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:

1. In most cases the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached.
2. Listen carefully and intently.
3. Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved.
4. Do not ask any leading questions.
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupils' trust by remaining honest.

6. Make a clear account of the conversation on an incident slip as soon as it has ended, but try to avoid taking notes during discussion.
7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Head of Pastoral Care. In his/her absence, report the matter to the Headmaster.
8. Discuss with the Head of Pastoral Care how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
9. Continue to address the incident as agreed with the Head of Pastoral Care.
10. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded on the incident slip, together with details of what action has been taken.
11. Liaise with the Head of Pastoral Care to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate
12. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the section in the Safeguarding Policy on physical restraint
13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned.
14. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported to the DSL and procedures should be followed, as detailed in the safeguarding policy. This is likely to involve reporting the incident to OSCB, and also to the police if it is believed that the safeguarding situation constitutes a criminal concern.
15. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

7. Information and Guidance for Pupils

As a member of the school, we expect you not to have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.

You should feel free to speak out to your mum or dad or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away.

When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.

Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. Even if you are just a bystander, you have a role to play in reporting any incidence of bullying.

Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.

Take care how you speak and act towards other pupils. Always aim to be considerate and helpful.

8. Information and Guidance for Parents

You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.

Encourage your child to talk about it, but be patient. It is quite natural for him or her not to want to discuss the matter and not to want you to do anything about it.

Listen and try not to interrupt.

Reassure them that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time.

Ask him or her if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised.

Try to keep the situation in proportion and so remain good-humoured.

Encourage your child to talk to their form teacher or tutor about the matter.

You should feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss the matter if you are concerned.

END

APPENDIX I

The Subtle Bully, Social Bullying, and Covert Bullying

We as a school do a lot on bullying and generally both boys and parents report that we have a robust system for detecting and dealing with bullying incidents. However there is a type of bullying that is more subtle and is particularly significant for boys who find social situations, such as friendships, difficult.

Social bullying can include:

- lying and spreading rumours
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Recently an incident arose that was the perfect storm. Loud, bossy, going on for attention ,flashy boy. Everyone felt he was an obvious potential bully. Good company could be charming to adults. The other boy was developmentally immature, joined late in the shadow of an older, big, very capable-of-holding-his-own brother. Personal appearance to some would have been a flag. This boy begged to be in the dorm with the alpha group of friends. The review of this found many people asked him almost daily if he was ok. He consistently said he was fine. Only when the spitting and too many bruises became obvious did he say and even then it was at the instigation of a member of staff who got wind of an incident.

In review of what happened what was obvious was his consistent denial that anything was wrong. Worse he appeared to be very keen to cling on to what he perceived was somewhere, anywhere, in the pecking order. We are all ruled by tribal instincts, everyone wants to be recognised and have a place, be accepted, even if it is on the lowest rung. This boy has autistic traits, his reading of jibes and joking language is skewed. He didn't have the insight to stop the momentum of his tormentors.

If you refer to the list of subtle bullying techniques, many autistic children won't register menacing or contemptuous looks in the same way and may mistake sarcasm for friendship.

This incident has been to a great extent resolved, the main aggressor and the victim are having counselling because not least when they leave here they will both be vulnerable for different reasons.

What can we do?

Be more vigilant at crucial times, **games change** is one of the worst. Dorm time in the evenings is going to be managed in a different way, with time in dorms being given as a reward for responsible behaviour.

Any gut feeling that staff have that this is occurring on any side must be reported to the Pastoral team and logged on ISAMS.

PSHE and Tutor Time

Reinforce our bullying policy and talk about feeling safe/ unsafe, not liking the way someone makes us feel. We all have the right to feel safe.

The most important observation that really got to us, was the way so many of his peers said 'Well yeah, I suppose it was bullying but he was annoying'. Nearly all those involved knew what was happening but did nothing. They all said they knew they could come to any of us but they didn't. They were complicit and very few showed remorse.

This needs to be drummed home, standing by and doing nothing means you are taking sides with the bully. The culture of 'Snitches get Stitches' is deeply embedded in this boy's peer group. We must do all we can to overturn this and make obvious distinctions between whining and speaking out. Most of the boys said this reinforced their reason for not helping the boy.

A useful tool for this type of social bullying is 'Fogging', ostensibly agreeing with the bully:

- You've got a massive nose
- Yes, it is big
- It's really huge
- Do you think so? That's your opinion. Etc

I find phrases which turn the emphasis back onto the bully such as , 'Sorry what's your problem?' useful. Teaching a boy a mantra like this, that he can churn out even under duress and when he is scared becomes empowering.

For more help try the website ncb.org.au (National Centre Against Bullying)