BRUERN ABBEY SCHOOL

Anti – Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all pupils in the school

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Annual review

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Contents

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 also draws on 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) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.* The policy also considers the way in which the school can ensure that the aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy are fulfilled in ensuring the rights of those with protected characteristics are upheld.

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 cyberbulling (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

1. 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.

Non-intended hurt

Not all hurtful behaviour is deliberate or intended to harm or hurt; there are instances of behaviour that are a consequence of thoughtlessness, unkindness or meanness. Any behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying behaviour. It is possible that in some instances bullying behaviour is not malicious and can be corrected with advice without the need for disciplinary sanctions. It must be made clear that these forms of bullying behaviour are equally unacceptable. It is not a justification for a bully to say they did not believe, or were not aware, the victim was upset or hurt by their actions; a repetition of such behaviours over time should lead to other actions in line with this policy and the behaviour policy.

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 such as an annual Anti Bullying week, elements of SEAL/SEAD 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 and peer mentoring 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 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. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like. South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) have created a tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists.

In line with the guidance in KCSIE 2023 the school recognises that children and young people have other ways of accessing the internet through the mobile network; and that this may be used to harass and bully others. The school has appropriate policies to address this through its policies on mobile use, outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.

In their ICT, PSHEE 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 1.

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 occuring 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.

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APPENDIX 1

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 autsitic 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)

Bellevue EDI Statement

This statement and the strategy which follows, is led by the CEO and the Education Committee but it is owned by everyone. It sets out our principles and our direction of travel to secure positive action. The conversations that arise in bringing this strategy to life, may challenge us and may make us uncomfortable, an open and honest discussion will drive the journey from where we are now to where we want to be.

As a group of schools working across the UK and international boundaries we serve and reflect a vibrant and diverse community. We celebrate the differences between us and we delight in this diversity. It makes us strong, it makes us unique and it makes us special. The commitments in this statement are made to everyone connected with us – our staff, our pupils, our parents and carers and our communities.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are core to the values of Bellevue and Leaders, without exception, must lead by example and embody inclusive behaviours and governance. Bellevue is committed to promoting EDI within our own organisation and across our schools. The fundamental goal of equality is to raise awareness and make sure that all individuals are treated equally, in a society that is respectful and accepting of difference so that we can find common ground through fairness. In our view there has never been a more important time for understanding and promoting equality and diversity in schools, within a rich and varied society the promotion of EDI in education is paramount for both students, teachers, families and communities

Core Principles

We understand that each of us is unique and that it is valuing and embracing these differences which bring new ideas, perspectives, learning - with the effect of making us collectively stronger. The belief that everyone connected with us must be equally valued and treated fairly is central to the group promise that 'Together we can'

In the context of this statement:

'Equality' means treating people fairly, ensuring they have equal opportunity to achieve their desired outcomes, and eliminating discrimination. Young people need to have an understanding of equality and human rights. This knowledge helps them to understand how they should be treated and how to treat others.

'Diversity' is concerned with representation and valuing individuals for the different perspectives they have to offer. Successfully teaching and raising awareness of diversity works to highlight individual characteristics and traits that make people unique rather than different. When children are taught to respect diversity, they gain knowledge and understanding that can help them to improve relationships, tackle prejudice, and make positive decisions throughout their lives. 'Inclusion' means ensuring that everybody has a voice and a means to participate, which may involve making reasonable adjustments to our usual processes. We want all members of your school community to share a sense of belonging in both the school and the wider community. This will help each individual to feel respected as an individual and to respect one another. This feeling of mutual respect makes it easier for students to participate in school life fully.
In Schools

Across schools the goal is to create a safe place without prejudice – where students have the opportunity to thrive, and all students are equal regardless of their identity. Through promoting equality and educating children about EDI, schools create a safe environment for students to challenge, discuss, explore, and form lasting values, morals, and opinions. Instilling young students with positive and open-minded attitudes, prepares them for the challenges and opportunities within modern society. Equality and fairness within and across the organisation is an ongoing priority for us so that we are all thriving individuals, experiencing and playing equal parts in our school communities. Core to our Strategy 2025 our responsibility to build an organisation which truly values equality and fairness. This applies fully to all members our community children, staff and families.
Within our strategy we will work to ensure that
● every child and young person, is proud of who they are and believes that they can and will achieve;
● every member of staff is supported to develop themselves and feel a true sense of belonging within the organisation and that regardless of their role;
● every parent and carer feels that their contribution is valued and welcomed in our schools;
● All feel included and their voice listened to

Our Commitments

We will do this through:
Ensuring pupils will be provided with a quality learning experience where they feel known, understood and cared for by their staff. Their backgrounds and experiences will be embraced in schools, and will experience a curriculum that will expose them to a wide range of opportunities within and outside of the classroom, which reflect an accurate picture of modern Britain, the World and history. This curriculum will be supported by diverse voices, where all pupils can see themselves and their families reflected. They will all access a rich and diverse educational

experience which broadens and enlivens their perspective and supports each and every one of them to achieve their very best. They will take with them these positive experiences, continuing to be ambassadors for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Enabling our staff to be strong role models whose influence can be life long and life changing. It is critical for our pupils that we attract and retain great people and that our workforce reflects the diversity that we value in our communities. We will enable and empower staff to work collaboratively – building on their strengths and working in a climate of trust. We will engage with a wide range of organisations to support the delivery of our programmes.

Working with parents and families to foster positive relationships. By working in partnership we can more effectively support the progress of our pupils. We want every parent and carer to feel that they are welcome, and welcomed, into our schools. Again, it is important for us to understand our parents' perspective and we will, on a regular basis, hear from them on what it is like to communicate with our schools and how this experience can be better.

Making our schools part of their local communities, being outward facing and engaging fully with our community. This may include attending community events, working with local community organisations and inviting members of our community into our schools. We will embrace partnership working with others who are able to support and develop us in bringing this statement to life now and in the future.

We will be proactive in addressing these through:
● implementation of transparent policies, practices, and procedures
● appropriate training, development and experiences of all parties involved
● promoting these principles across the curriculum
● challenging any non-inclusive views held by anyone within the school and wider community.

We model what we value and in so doing, establish our culture. Our behaviours and how we communicate with each other are central to this. Whatever position we hold, we should feel empowered to challenge any action which undermines this commitment. We will, on a regular basis, seek to understand from pupils, staff and parents what it is like to be part of the Bellevue family of schools.

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