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# Preventing Bullying Policy

February 2024

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 University of Birmingham School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they are able to learn in a safe and secure atmosphere.
- 1.2 Bullying occurs in all Schools but we are committed to work with our pupils and their parents to tackle bullying behaviour. We are also committed to developing compassion and empathy, courage and responsibility and a culture of 'no outsiders' so pupils are positively kind and respectful to each other and celebrate their differences.
- 1.3 Bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- 1.4 **The Equality Act 2010** replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
  - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
  - d) The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber – bullying by providing a specific power to search for and if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones.
  - e) Criminal law does not specify bullying as a criminal offence in the UK, however it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence for example under the Protection from Harassment 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. The School may need to seek assistance from the police if an incident is considered to be a criminal offence.
- 1.5 When bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to speak to staff and members of their family knowing that incidents will be dealt with promptly and seriously.
- 1.6 We aim to be a '**telling**' School - anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff who will listen and respond.
- 1.7 We are also a '**Restorative School**'. When incidents are reported or uncovered, a restorative justice approach will be used to mend relationships and alter behaviour.
- 1.8 Bullying which occurs outside School premises School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the School premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a School's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on School premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of School staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the School to regulate pupils' behaviour in

those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the School premises, such as on School or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

## 2. Definition of Bullying

2.0 Bullying is defined by four key characteristics – behaviour or actions towards another that are:

- Repetitive and persistent;
- Intentionally harmful;
- Involving an imbalance of power;
- Causing feels of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence.

In our School, we use the slightly adapted version offered by the Anti Bullying Alliance of:

2.1 **‘the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online’**

2.2 Bullying is often felt to be between two individuals where one is bad and one is good. But it’s actually more nuanced than that. Bullying tends to be a group behaviour and it often has an audience. Research shows that there are some key roles that appear in bullying incidents. In line with this research we will often use the terminology of the Anti-Bullying Alliance which describes these roles as ringleader, target, assistant, defender and bystander. We will work with all pupils in showing how they can play an active role in preventing bullying by taking on the role of defender. In our school, we call that an **‘upstander’**.

2.3 Whilst we encourage all pupils to show empathy and compassion, inevitably pupils will fall out, make wrong choices and say and do things that are unkind, wrong or show intolerance, prejudice and a lack of understanding. These incidents in isolation are serious and will be followed up within the general behaviour policy but do not meet the definition of bullying.

2.4 Students are bullied for a variety of reasons – and for no reason. Specific types of bullying include: bullying related to race, religion or culture; bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities (SEND); bullying related to appearance or health conditions; bullying related to sexual orientation; bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances; sexist or sexual bullying. Bullying can be direct or indirect and includes:

- a) **Verbal bullying** – name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments and teasing
- b) **Physical bullying** – kicking, hitting, punching, pushing and pinching
- c) **Emotional bullying** - producing offensive graffiti, excluding people from groups, spreading hurtful and untrue rumours, being forced to do things against someone’s own will and taking belongings or money
- d) **Cyber bullying** – offensive communication by text, email or image sent by telephone or the internet. It is a “method” of bullying, rather than a “type” of bullying. It includes bullying via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone. It can take the form of

any of the previously discussed types of bullying – i.e. technology can be used to bully for reasons of race, religion, sexuality, disability, etc.

- e) **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- f) **Homophobic and transphobic bullying** – a specific form of bullying motivated by prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual people and transgender people (LGBT)(LGBT), or against those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. In this way, a person's identity is used to abuse them and homophobic bullying can therefore be experienced by all students, regardless of their sexuality identity and/ or gender. The School will always challenge the use of homophobic and transphobic language even when it not directed at an individual and especially where the excuse may be 'banter', explaining that such behaviour is neither compassionate nor kind, and is likely to make people feel like 'outsiders'.
- g) **Racist bullying** – the School is committed to be an anti-racist School and is currently developing a separate policy around this.

- 2.5 Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults, or alternatively may themselves become aggressive and begin to bully others.
- 2.6 University of Birmingham School's teaching and support staff will be vigilant for evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from School but will often rely on families sharing their concerns when bullying is hidden.
- 2.7 They will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy. Students will be encouraged to report bullying as part of the Learning for Life Programme taught by Form Tutors.
- 2.8 Bullying can take place between pupils/students, between pupils/students and staff; or between staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods.
- 2.9 It can happen in isolation or quite often in the presence of others.
- 2.10 Bullying may start from an individual or from a group.
- 2.11 Girls and boys are equally involved in bullying or being bullied.
- 2.12 Bullying occurs more frequently when there is less teacher supervision, before or after School, during break and lunch-time, in toilets or PE changing rooms.

### 3 Inclusion

- 3.1 Every member of the School community is entitled to expect equality of protection from bullying as well as protection and support from School policies and procedures designed to ensure that the School remains a safe environment in which to teach and learn.
- 3.2 Our School policy has given careful consideration to the six equality strands, race, gender, age, religion, disability, gender reassignment and sexuality.

- 3.3 This is to ensure that preventing bullying provision is provided in a sensitive and non-judgemental way that will enable all young people, staff and the wider School community to feel valued and included in effective policy and practices.

**4 Statement of Intent - University of Birmingham School believes that:**

- a) bullying is undesirable and unacceptable;
- b) bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found, even if ultimately this means the bully leaving the School;
- c) seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength not weakness;
- d) all members of the School community will be listened to and taken seriously;
- e) bullying prevents students achieving to their full potential and affects standards of achievement and aspirations;
- f) everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear;
- g) all of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others;
- h) young people should be encouraged to seek support in School if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously;
- i) young people should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them, and;
- j) we all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.

**5 Aims of the Policy**

- 5.1 To assist in creating an ethos in which attending this School is a positive experience for all members of our community.
- 5.2 To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at this School.
- 5.3 To enable everyone to feel safe while at School and encourage students to report incidences of bullying.
- 5.4 To deal effectively with bullying.
- 5.5 To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- 5.6 To help and support bullies to change their attitudes as well as their behaviour and understand why it needs to change.
- 5.7 To liaise with students, parents and other appropriate members of the School community.
- 5.8 To ensure all members of the School community feel responsible for combating bullying.
- 5.9 To ensure consistency in practice within the School community.

## **6 Intended Outcomes**

- 6.1 That there are effective listening systems for pupils, students and staff within the School.
- 6.2 That parents and carers have a point of contact for the School if they are concerned about their child.
- 6.3 That all staff have the necessary skills and confidence to deal with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly.
- 6.4 That no child or young person's educational opportunities and achievement is disadvantaged due to the experience of bullying.
- 6.5 That all staff are equipped with the skills necessary to notice bullying and support or report incidents.
- 6.6 That the wider School community (e.g. Professional Services Staff) are involved in dealing effectively with, reporting, recording, monitoring and if necessary referring bullying incidents.
- 6.7 That there is effective communication with parents and carers and the wider School community on the subject of bullying through newsletters and parents' meetings.
- 6.8 That all incidents of bullying are recorded and appropriate use is made of the information and where appropriate shared with relevant organisations.

## **7 School Targets:**

- a) To reduce the number of incidents of bullying in the School through a robust anti-bullying policy and by embedding the virtues of compassion, kindness, courage, and promoting 'No outsiders' and 'Up-standers', to encourage the community to be pro-active in noticing and calling out bullying.
- b) To raise awareness of the impacts of bullying in the School.
- c) To raise awareness of the support systems in place for bullied students in the School.
- d) To log, investigate and act upon all incidents classified as bullying.

## **8 Recording of Incidents**

- 8.1 It is a requirement for Schools to record all incidents of bullying.
- 8.2 To meet this requirement we:
  - a) Keep a record of individual incidents of bullying;
  - b) Compile an annual record of bullying incidents which is passed to the Governors at the end of every academic year, and;
  - c) Ensure that an annual analysis of the bullying record is undertaken by the School including members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

## **9 Procedures and Dealing with Incidents**

- 9.1 Role of pupils, students and staff in reporting and recording a bullying incident involving pupils and/or students:
- a) Everyone has a responsibility to report incidents of bullying or to share their concerns with a member of the School community.
  - b) At University of Birmingham School all staff will follow the School guide to reporting and dealing with bullying incidents.
- 9.2 Guidance for Pupils/Students:
- a) If you are being bullied:
    - Remember it is not your fault;
    - Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can, and;
    - If possible, tell the bully that you don't like what they are doing and tell them to stop.
  - b) After you have been bullied:
    - All bullying is wrong and you do not have to stay silent about it;
    - Tell an adult or somebody you trust about what has happened straight away;
    - Adults in our School have a responsibility to give you help and support around bullying;
    - If you are scared to tell a teacher or adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you, and;
    - Keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying.
  - c) When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:
    - What has happened to you;
    - How often it has happened;
    - Who was involved;
    - Who saw what was happening;
    - Where it happened, and;
    - What you have done about it already.
  - d) If you experience bullying by mobile phone, text messages, online or e-mail;
    - Don't retaliate or reply;
    - Save the evidence, do not delete anything;
    - Make sure you tell an adult who you trust;
    - Contact your service provider or look at their website to see where to report incidents;
    - Be careful who you give your mobile phone number or e-mail address to, and;
    - Make a note of exactly when a threatening message was sent.



### 9.3 Guidance for Parents/Carers

- a) It is natural for a parent/ carer to experience a range of feelings if they believe their child is being bullied, including anxiety, fear, sadness and anger; the most important thing to do is calmly ascertain the facts as the child sees them, and then speak with the School to do some further investigation. Any incidents of malicious behaviour be they verbal or physical, and whether they occur in real life or online will be followed up, but not all these incidents will fit the definition of bullying.
- Calmly talk with your child about their experiences;
  - Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what happened;
  - Reassure your child that he/ she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying;
  - Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur they should report them to an adult in School **immediately**;
  - Speak to your child's Form Tutor or Pupil Pastoral Manager in the first instance.
  - Explain to the Form Tutor or Pupil Pastoral Manager the problems your child is experiencing.
- b) When talking with members of staff about bullying:
- Try to stay calm and bear in mind that the staff member may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident;
  - Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates, places and names of other children involved;
  - Make a note of what action the School intends to take;
  - Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the School, and;
  - Stay in touch with the School and let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.
- c) If you are not satisfied:
- Check with the School's 'Preventing Bullying Policy' to see if agreed procedures are being followed;
  - Contact the pastoral team or Assistant Vice Principal Pastoral and Wellbeing.
  - If you require any further support then please contact the Chair of the Governors' Pastoral Committee.
- d) If your child is displaying bullying behaviour towards others:
- Talk with your child and explain that what they are doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy;
  - Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want;
  - Show your child how they can join in with other children without bullying;
  - Contact your child's Form Tutor/PPM and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop them bullying others;



- Regularly check with your child how things are going at School, and;
  - Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people
- e) If your child is experiencing any form of cyber bullying:
- Ensure your child is careful whom they give their mobile phone number and e-mail address to;
  - Check exactly when a threatening message was sent and keep evidence of offending; e-mails, text messages or online conversations. Do not delete messages;
  - If the bullying involves a pupil or student from School contact the School to report this;
  - Contact the service provider to report the incidents, and;
  - If the cyberbullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed, you should consider contacting the police.

9.4 Guidance for adults experiencing bullying:

The responses may be broadly similar or vary if it is an adult being bullied. If you are experiencing bullying as an adult:

- a) Seek advice and information from your union;
- b) Share your concerns with a trusted colleague;
- c) Make a record of all incidents and date them, and;
- d) If you feel your situation is not being resolved then you should follow the School's formal complaints procedures as adopted by the Governing Body.

9.5 Sanctions will be fairly and consistently applied. They may include:

- a) official warnings to cease offending;
- b) removal from the group (form group or teaching group);
- c) exclusion from certain areas of School premises;
- d) withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- e) detention;
- f) internal suspension;
- g) withholding participation in any School trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum, and;
- h) fixed-term suspension.

9.6 Where other strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

9.7 Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- a) thoroughly discussing the incident(s);
- b) discovering why the student became involved;
- c) establishing the wrong doing and need to change, and;
- d) informing parents or carers to help change the attitude of the student.

9.8 It is important that the School is open and transparent in the sanctions used for bullying incidents.

9.9 This School has set procedures to follow in implementing sanctions where a bullying incident has occurred.

- 9.10 These sanctions are applied in appropriate proportion to develop a swift resolution.
- 9.11 The revised DfE Revised Guidance of September 2007, Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Student Referral Units, (Section 17) states:  
“In cases where a Principal has permanently excluded a student for persistent and defiant misbehaviour (which would include racist or homophobic bullying)....the Secretary of State would not normally expect the Governors’ Discipline Committee or an Independent Appeal Panel to reinstate the student.”
- 9.12 However, Governors will examine the evidence that a wide range of strategies had been tried and failed to affect a positive change in the bullying behaviour.

## **10 Strategies to Reduce Bullying**

- 10.1 The School will adopt a range of strategies to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and support victims and those displaying bullying behaviour including:
- a) Promoting compassion and empathy as part of our School culture
  - b) Delivering a ‘no outsiders’ programme to all pupils when they join year 7, and at various points throughout Key stages
  - c) Peer mediation;
  - d) Counselling;
  - e) Buddy systems;
  - f) Highlighting ‘Anti Bullying Week’, and;
  - g) Training for all members of staff on the Preventing Bullying Policy and Procedures.

## **11 Confidentiality**

- 11.1 School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil or student for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils and students.
- 11.2 Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.
- 11.3 It is very rare for a pupil or student to request absolute confidentiality.
- 11.4 If they do, in situations other than those involving child protection issues, staff must make a careful judgement whether or not a third party needs to be informed.
- 11.5 This judgement will be based upon:
- a) The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the student may be experiencing.
  - b) The pupil/student’s age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.
- 11.6 Where it is clear that a pupil/student would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek consent of the student to do so.
- 11.7 If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the student.
- 11.8 Unless clearly inappropriate, pupils/students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent or carer.

- 11.9 An underlying principle in supporting pupils/students in our School is that all children are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of bullying will be taken seriously.
- 11.10 Although the School cannot guarantee confidentiality, students will be informed of national and local helplines, if appropriate, where confidentiality can be maintained.

## **12 Monitoring Arrangements**

- 12.1 This policy will be evaluated and updated where necessary annually by the whole School.
- 12.2 The views of students, parents and staff will be used to make changes and improvements to the policy on an ongoing basis.
- 12.3 Monitoring will identify trends and enable follow-up of incidents and results of actions take, thus, showing whether the policy is effective.
- 12.4 Records will be monitored and information on action taken will be made available to tutors, and parents, if requested.
- 12.5 A summary of bullying incidents will be provided to the Governors yearly as part of the Vice Principal's Report.
- 12.4 The Senior Leadership Team and Governors' Pastoral Committee will, on an annual basis, analyse the School's bullying data, identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of 'Preventing Bullying' strategy.

## **13 Evaluation**

- 13.1 Like other policies within School, it will be reviewed on an annual cycle.
- 13.2 Data from monitoring and feedback, which staff, families, student and Governors provide will be used to review and update the policy.