



# Brentwood School

## SENIOR SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### **Introduction**

Bullying of any form will not be tolerated in the school. It is recognised that bullying has a seriously adverse effect on the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals and on their educational achievements. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable and by promoting the ethos of Virtue, Learning and Manners. This policy is informed by the DfE Guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', (July 2017) and "Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff", (November, 2014). Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident will 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'. As a school with some boarding, we are also guided by our obligations laid out in the National Minimum standards for boarding.

### **Aims and objectives**

The school aims to prevent bullying of all forms within the school community. In the first instance, the objective is to provide awareness and training for all (pupils and staff) of the corrosive effects of bullying and the measures that can be taken to prevent it from happening in the first place. We aim to ensure that, where bullying does occur at Brentwood School, its incidence remains comparatively low. Where incidents of bullying involving pupils occur off school premises, such as on school or public transport or in Brentwood High Street, and are reported to school staff, these will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Our objectives are to become aware of bullying quickly and provide a swift and robust outcome with suitable support (and if necessary training) for all concerned so that it does not reoccur.

In all cases the school believes that:

- bullying can be countered effectively
- bullying is learned behaviour and can be unlearned
- bullies need help and support to change their behaviour patterns
- victims need a balance between protection and empowerment

The methods adopted to achieve these aims and objectives are outlined in the rest of this policy document.

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying may be defined as: “behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.” (DfE – “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” – July 2017)

Bullying is often hidden and subtle, it can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone: pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

NSPCC - Bullying includes:

- verbal abuse, such as name calling and gossiping;
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages;
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone;
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone;
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours;
- controlling or manipulating someone;
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying;
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing;
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls;
- online or cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages;
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos;
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games;
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups;
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child;
- encouraging young people to self-harm;
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll;
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name;
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting;
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations. (NSPCC)

## **The School's Response to Bullying**

At Brentwood School, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

## **Signs of Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the Sanatorium with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares;
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

## **Preventative Measures**

We take the following preventative measures in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with Brentwood School:

### **Staff**

**All staff have a responsibility to be on the alert for bullying and cyberbullying and to take action to prevent further bullying.**

- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of (tutors, Heads of Year, Deputy Heads of Year, Pastoral Managers, the Chaplain and Boarding House Master/Mistresses) who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies;
- All staff are trained so that the School's anti-bullying policy is understood, their legal responsibilities are known and they are aware of how to access sources of support. Staff are trained to be alert to the needs of and understand how to support pupils with protected characteristics (e.g. Special Educational Needs or Disability, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils)) and in how to react to allegations of bullying. They are required to read the School's Anti-bullying policy as part of their induction;
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils;
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept by Heads of Year

- and reviewed regularly by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- Staff are on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour;
  - In the two boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the House Master and House Mistress who act *in loco parentis* and a member of the boarding house staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom;
  - The School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths, he will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community;
  - Our School Counsellor is also available to support pupils affected by bullying or cyberbullying.

### **Pupils**

- All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying or cyberbullying "Who can I talk to?" posters are displayed around the site to alert pupils to the action they can take if they are concerned about themselves or a fellow pupil and all pupils have a card with links to external support agencies, including the NSPCC website and ChildLine;
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place in line with our policy on whistle-blowing. All boarders know how to report anxieties to their Housemaster/mistress or to another member of the pastoral team;
- All pupils in boarding have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private;
- We operate a peer counselling scheme, whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils and a Deputy Head of School leading a team of Praepostors is linked to each year group;
- We provide leadership training to our Head of School and their team of Praepostors which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils;
- We use appropriate Assemblies and Chapel services to explain the school policy on bullying. Our Life Skills (PSHE) programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. Pupils are made aware of the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- In the curriculum, other lessons, particularly RE, English and Drama may highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing the social skills to deal with this;
- Our Sanatorium and both of our boarding houses display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline;
- We welcome feedback from pupils on the effectiveness of our anti-bullying measures.

## **Parents**

- The School will work closely with the parents to deal with instances of bullying;
- We encourage close contact between the Housemaster/mistress and parents/guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being, unless by doing so the child would suffer, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm;
- All parents are able to access the School's anti-bullying policy via the School's website;
- All parents have a part to play in protecting their child online and in being vigilant through the management of electronic devices and appropriate supervision and monitoring out of school;
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

## **Cyber-bullying – Preventative Measures**

**Online safety is part of the school's wider safeguarding strategy. Please also refer to the Whole School Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Management Policies.**

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Brentwood School:

- Has an Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices, including phones and iPads;
- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet during and outside formal lessons. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our ITSS Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address;
- Adheres to the PREVENT guidelines regarding E-Learning and the internet;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in Life Skills which covers blocking, removing contacts from "buddy" lists and sharing personal data;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- Does not allow the use of cameras on mobile phones or other mobile devices in school without teacher permission;
- Discourages parents from taking photographs of pupils undertaking school activities unless specifically invited to do so.

## **Procedure for dealing with reported bullying**

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will reassure the pupils involved and will make sure all parties are safe; this may include dealing with a situation in which a child has reported bullying or cyberbullying out of school.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible of action taken so far and take advice as to what to do next;
- The victim will usually be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events, if appropriate at the time, and will offered support to develop a strategy to move forward positively;
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will usually be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events;

- The incident should be recorded in writing and passed to the Head of Year who will record it on the confidential Year Group Log (monitored by the Deputy Head);
- The Head of Year or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will inform the tutors (Boarding House Master) of both the bully/bullies and the victims as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Headmaster will be informed;
- The alleged bully will be interviewed by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the school's Behaviour Management Policy; for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect permanent exclusion;
- When an incident of bullying has been identified and investigated the parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be informed and involved, as appropriate, in order to best resolve the problem;
- A way forward, which may include disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy;
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place;
- Bullying will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases the Headmaster/DSL will make a referral to children's social care and the Police where it is suspected, or is known, that a crime has been committed;
- In cases in which bullying does not constitute a child protection concern (as outlined above), it is the policy of Brentwood School to attempt to resolve issues of bullying internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures. The School may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

### **Practical Guidelines for pupils and parents**

#### **For Pupils - What can you do if you are being bullied?**

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong;
- Try not to show that you are upset; try to look and sound confident;
- Try to ignore the bully; remember that they want a reaction and try not to give one;
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers;
- If you are the victim of cyber-bullying, do not respond to messages and inform your tutor or other member of teaching staff as soon as you can;
- Inform your tutor or any other member of teaching staff as soon as you can. They will take you seriously and deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and not make matters worse for you.

#### **For Pupils - If you know someone is being bullied:-**

- Don't stand and watch; fetch help. Tell an adult immediately. Teachers have ways of dealing with bullying without getting you in to trouble;
- If a friend tells you that they are being bullied try to persuade them to tell a teacher themselves. If this does not happen you should tell a teacher yourself;

- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully. Show that you and your friends disapprove;
- Be sympathetic and supportive to someone who may be being bullied;
- Be careful about teasing people or making personal remarks; if what you are about to say may be hurtful, do not say it;
- Do not join in with hurtful comments being made about a fellow pupil using any form of technology.

#### Guidance for Parents

- Watch for signs of distress in your child, for example, they suddenly may not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to a normal standard;
- Be aware of your child's use of technology, including social media, and check security settings are in place – the school can advise;
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School immediately with as many details as you can. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken;
- Discourage your child from hitting back as this will only exacerbate the issue;
- Encourage your child to talk to his/her tutor about any worries.

#### Guidance for Staff (proactive and preventative action)

- Offer positive role models in terms of mutual respect, listening and problem solving;
- Be alert to unkind comments made by pupils to each other and intervene quickly to put a stop to them in lessons, around the site, on trips and visits and outside school;
- Be aware of early signs of distress or withdrawal in pupils;
- Always listen, take seriously and act upon information received;
- Ensure that all accessible areas of the School are patrolled effectively;
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other e.g. The Curriculum, Assemblies, Form Time, Chapel, the Life Skills (PSHE) programme;
- Build positive self-images among the pupils;
- Commend appropriate behaviour;
- Deal effectively with any concerns about bullying raised by pupils, parents or colleagues.

#### Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use the School Complaints Procedure if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. This is available on the school website or on application to the school office. Parents of boarders should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

# ANTI-BULLYING CODE

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that hurts someone else, such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over time and can hurt an individual both physically and emotionally.

## **Bullying includes:**

- verbal abuse, such as name calling and gossiping;
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages;
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone;
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone;
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours;
- controlling or manipulating someone;
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying;
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing;
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls;
- online or cyberbullying.

## **Cyberbullying includes:**

- sending threatening or abusive text messages;
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos;
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games;
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups;
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child;
- encouraging young people to self-harm;
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll;
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name;
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting;
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

## **What can you do if you are being bullied?**

- Inform your tutor or any other member of staff immediately who will take you seriously and deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and not make matters worse for you;
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong;
- Try not to show that you are upset; try to look and sound confident;
- Try to ignore the bully; remember that they want a reaction and try not to give one;
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers;
- If you are the victim of cyber-bullying, do not respond to messages and inform your tutor or other member of teaching staff as soon as you can.

**If you know someone is being bullied?**

- Don't stand and watch; fetch help. Tell an adult immediately. Teachers have ways of dealing with bullying without getting you in to trouble;
- If a friend tells you that they are being bullied try to persuade them to tell a teacher themselves. If this does not happen you should tell a teacher yourself;
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully. Show that you and your friends disapprove;
- Be sympathetic and supportive to someone who may be being bullied;
- Be careful about teasing people or making personal remarks; if what you are about to say may be hurtful, do not say it.

**The Childline Helpline for confidential help and advice is 0800 1111**