



Brentwood School Anti-Bullying Policy

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Relevant to:	Whole School (3-18)		
Relevant Legislation/Guidance:	Independent School Standards Regulations (2014) The Children Act (1989) Equality Act (2010) ‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying’, (July 2017), (DfE Guidance) ‘Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff’, (November, 2014) National Minimum standards for boarding Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1), September 2022		
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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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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.

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'.

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, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment/identity, pregnancy or maternity, 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;
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing;
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls;
- online or cyberbullying.

These types of bullying are also hate crime:

- racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- bullying someone because they have a disability

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;
- shaming someone online
- 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 values of "Virtue, Learning and Manners" and our policy on equal opportunities. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, can have a damaging impact on mental health and may lead, for example, to children self-harming, or, in the most extreme cases to a child or young person taking their own life. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Adults can also be affected by bullying and the bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable.

Signs of Bullying

Signs which indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Changes in usual behaviour or routines;
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school;
- Frequent visits to the Sanatorium or medical room;
- Not doing as well at school;
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them);
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn;
- Problems with eating or sleeping;
- Choosing the company of adults;
- Bullying others.

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 the school and parents, working in partnership.

Understanding who is at risk of bullying

Any child can be bullied for any reason. However we also recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable than others. If a child is seen as different in some way or seen as an easy target they can be more at risk. Vulnerable groups include children;

- looked after
- with caring responsibilities
- with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- from ethnic minorities
- in receipt of financial assistance from the school (Bursaries)
- for whom English is an additional Language
- who are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual
- suffering from physical or mental health problems
- with allergies or intolerances

Preventative Measures

We take the following preventative measures in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem:

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 form tutors and class teachers, Heads of Year, Deputy Heads of Year, Pastoral Managers and Mentors, the Chaplain and the Heads of the Boarding Houses, Director and Assistant Director of Pupil

Wellbeing and Director of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding who support the Deputy Heads (Pastoral), Head of EYFS and KS1 and the Headmasters of the Senior and Prep School;

- 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 and implemented, 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. race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment/identity, pregnancy or maternity), or special educational needs 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 as a priority. We always monitor reported incidents. In the Senior School, records of any incidents are kept by Heads of Year and Heads of the Boarding Houses and reviewed regularly by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored. In the Prep School, these records are kept and reviewed by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of EYFS and KS1;
- Staff are on duty at times when pupils are not in class, supervising the children and being particularly aware of areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to and act on inappropriate language or behaviour;
- In the two boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the Heads of the Boarding Houses who act *in loco parentis* and a member of the boarding house staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils.
- 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 Counsellors are also available to support pupils affected by bullying or cyberbullying.

Pupils

- All pupils are briefed on the school's shared values and expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying or cyberbullying "Who can I talk to?" posters and the Anti-Bullying Codes 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 Senior School 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. All boarders know how to report concerns to the Heads of the Boarding Houses or to another member of the pastoral team;
- All pupils in boarding have access to an independent listener as well as telephone helplines, enabling them to call for support in private, and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who oversees boarding, holds a weekly open-door session for boarders;
- In the Senior School, the Head of School, Deputies, the Praepostor team and peer mentors are trained to support younger pupils and a Deputy Head of School, leading

a team of Praepostors, is linked to each year group. In the Prep School there is a buddy system in place;

- We use appropriate Assemblies and Chapel services to explain the school policy on bullying. Our Wellbeing (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 kindness, looking after each other and being part of a caring community. Pupils are made aware of the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- Across the curriculum, opportunities are taken, as appropriate, to highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message that bullying is always unacceptable;
- We welcome feedback from pupils on the effectiveness of our anti-bullying measures.

Parents

- The School will work closely with parents/guardians to deal with instances of bullying and contact home, 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 when using social media 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.

Cyberbullying – 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 the Wellbeing (PSHE) programme which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friends/buddy" lists and not sharing their location;
- 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, except for the EYFS where the use of mobile phones is not permitted;
- 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 be 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 Bullying Log (monitored by the Deputy Head, Pastoral). In the Prep School, these records are kept by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of EYFS and KS1;
- The Head of Year, Director of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Senior School, or the Head of EYFS and KS1 will inform the tutors/class teachers/Head of the relevant Boarding House 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, unless by doing so the child would suffer, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm;
- 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. When applying sanctions The School will consider the age and needs of pupils including any physical or Special Educational Needs;
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned as part of a restorative process to help bring closure;
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place;
- In boarding, we recognise that boarders who are being bullied may need additional support as they cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time, particularly as they may not go home often;

- In cases where the victim and the bully are both boarders, a support plan, monitored by the House team, will be put in place for both parties;
- 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 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;
- Inform your tutor or any other member of the 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.
- If you are the victim of cyberbullying, do not respond to messages and inform your tutor or other member of teaching staff as soon as you can;

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; you could offer to do this with them. If this does not happen you should tell a teacher yourself;
- If someone in your friendship group is acting as a bully, including via the internet or social media, do not join in. Show that you and your friends disapprove and alert an adult to help the victim(s);
- 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 use "banter" as an excuse to make hurtful or unkind comments;
- 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 concern 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 you and 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 supervised effectively;
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other in line with the School's values and ethos e.g. the Curriculum, Assemblies, Form Time, Chapel and the Wellbeing (PSHE) programme;
- Enable all pupils to develop a positive sense of self;
- Commend appropriate behaviour;
- Deal effectively with any concerns about bullying raised by pupils, parents or colleagues.

Complaints Procedure

If parents or pupils feel that their concerns about bullying have not been addressed, they should refer to the [School Complaints Procedure](#).



Brentwood School

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, homophobic or transphobic bullying;
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing;
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls;
- online or cyberbullying.

These types of bullying are also hate crime:

- racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- bullying someone because they have a disability

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages;
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- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games;
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- If you are the victim of cyberbullying, do not respond to messages and inform your tutor or other member of teaching staff as soon as you can.

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- If a friend tells you that they are being bullied, try to persuade them to tell a teacher themselves; you could offer to do this with them. If this does not happen you should tell a teacher yourself;
- If someone in your friendship group is acting as a bully, including via the internet or social media, do not join in. Show that you and your friends disapprove and alert an adult to help the victim(s);
- 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 use "banter" as an excuse to make hurtful or unkind comments;
- Do not join in with hurtful comments being made about a fellow pupil using any form of technology.

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

Help from Childline can also be accessed at [Childline online](https://www.childline.gov.uk)