



BOLTON
SCHOOL
GIRLS' DIVISION

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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This policy was drawn up with reference to DfE Guidance (October 2014): Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies and the DfE fact sheet (March 2014) on how to support children who are bullied. It reflects colleagues' duties under the Equality Act 2010. It should be read in conjunction with the following documents, as appropriate:

- The relevant school's Behaviour Management and Rewards and Sanctions Policies;
- The relevant school's school rules and regulations.

Under the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, the proprietor of an independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

At Bolton School Girls' Division, we aim to promote personal dignity and self esteem, through providing a safe environment which welcomes diversity and encourages mutual respect, and to encourage students to be sensitive to the beliefs, values and practices of others.

We recognise that bullying, whether emotional or physical, is a serious issue which occurs in all schools and that bullying undermines self-esteem and sense of security, and may affect a child's attendance and attainment. It can lead to serious psychological damage for the victim and a criminal record for the perpetrators. It is possible for any member of the school community to experience bullying. Our policy is to reject and be seen to reject all forms of bullying. No-one deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. In developing this policy we have considered the needs and views of our pupils, their parents, and those of the teaching staff.

Definition of bullying

The DfE Guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying defines bullying to be "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, including repeated occurrences of physical, psychological, social or verbal abuse and cyber-bullying (see below). It can involve threats, physical attacks, name-calling, mocking, harassment and sexual bullying. Bullying may be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It may be directed against those with a special educational need or disability or a different appearance. It may be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences. Bullying can occur between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff. It can be perpetrated face to face or indirectly.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual

imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; judgements have to be made about each specific case.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school.

The Byron Review stated: "*Cyber-bullying is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.*"

Cyber-bullying includes using mobile phones, iPads or internet sites to send abusive messages or make defamatory statements about pupils or teachers. It includes cyber stalking, "sexting", "trolling", "happy slapping" and unauthorised publication of private information or images. Cyber-bullying can happen at all times of the day, and has the potential to reach a wide audience. It can undermine the self-esteem of individual pupils and can undermine the professional status of staff. Some cyber-bullying is deliberate and intentional, but in other cases distress to the victim can be caused by something that is seen as a joke by the perpetrator.

Cyber-bullying can be a criminal offence; children are criminally responsible for their actions and their consequences from the age of 10. (See 'Criminal Law' below).

In seeking to prevent bullying, the School will:

- take a proactive approach to preventing bullying and to mitigating its effects when it occurs;
- create an ethos of good behaviour and an atmosphere of inclusivity and equality, where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave and that our actions affect others;
- communicate clear expectations about pupil behaviour, including what to do if pupils find themselves bystanders when bullying behaviour occurs;
- train certain pupils as Peer Mentors to provide a listening ear to younger girls;
- develop among staff an appreciation that they should gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict; be observant for signs of bullying behaviour (including changes in a victim's personality) and be open to hearing any child's concerns in any context, but particularly during Form Periods and PSHEE lessons;
- ensure that staff duties take in to account the need to ensure appropriate supervision of areas where bullying might take place at break/ lunchtimes;
- ensure that staff understand the need to arrive on time for lessons as bullying often occurs when no member of staff is present;
- raise awareness of the issue and of this anti-bullying policy, to ensure parents, staff and pupils are alert to and accepting of the possibility of bullying, and to ensure that it is the responsibility of everyone to report any incident of bullying;
- ensure that opportunities provided by PSHEE, assemblies and other events are used to enable the pupils to understand differences between people and the

- importance of avoiding prejudice-based language as well as to develop the ability to protect themselves from unwanted behaviour through assertiveness training;
- ensure that staff take part in training which enables them to understand the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils, and to listen out of inappropriate comments or spot untoward actions;
 - consult with groups of pupils to gain a true understanding of what is going on, including at School Council;
 - make parents aware of the school's policies and procedures on dealing with bullying, including the need to contact the Head of School if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn;

In seeking to prevent Cyber bullying, the School will

- adopt the Foundation's Acceptable Use Policies, including provisions designed to reduce the misuse of the iPad's and to prevent cyber-bullying;
- ensure Staff keep up to date with the technologies which the girls are using;
- deliver PSHEE lessons which include specific training regarding the safe use of ICT, particularly mobile phones, iPads and the internet, as well as age-appropriate information about grooming, internet sites containing violent or adult content and the dangers of sharing personal information and/or photographs;
- use the School's Device Manager system to prevent girls from accessing social media sites on their iPad;
- alert parents (via the Headmistress's email) to sites which are causing problems for girls;
- restrict use of mobile phones and emails by girls below Year 11 during the School day: abuse of this rule leads to the 'phone being confiscated for the remainder of the day;
- ban girls from taking a still or moving image on the School site or on the School coaches without the specific, prior permission of a member of staff: this rule is conveyed to pupils regularly, including at an assembly at the start of the year;
- convene an annual meeting between the Headmistress, Assistant Head, Head of PSHEE and the Head of ICT to discuss how Internet safety is dealt with in School, including discussion of how to avoid Cyberbullying;
- regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers.

In seeking to deal with bullying if it occurs, the School will:

- develop clear systems for reporting bullying (including on the grounds of the protected characteristics- age, disability, marriage/ civil partnership, pregnancy/ maternity, gender reassignment, race, religious belief, sex and sexual orientation) and make everyone aware of the procedures to be followed in dealing with incidents;
- prevent, de-escalate and stop any continuation of harmful behaviour;
- discuss with parents what has been happening;
- react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way, taking in to account any special educational needs or disabilities, and implementing disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect;

- take steps to help 'victims' feel safe and confident again, including by offering counselling services and the use of external agencies where appropriate;
- work with bullies where necessary and as appropriate, so that they are held to account for their actions and accept responsibility for the harm they have caused;
- consider whether the motivations behind bullying behaviour reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator;
- maintain a central bullying log which ensures that patterns of behaviour and the effectiveness of interventions can be appropriately monitored.

Sanctions which may be applied in the event of bullying

Any disciplinary penalty applied will have three main purposes:

- to impress on the perpetrator that what she has done is unacceptable;
- to deter her from repeating that behaviour; and
- to signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Disciplinary penalties may include removal of "free" time, detention, internal or external exclusion, including permanent exclusion in the most serious and/or persistent cases. In the case of cyber bullying they may also include the confiscation or regular monitoring of mobile phones or other mobile technology whilst in school and withdrawal of access to school ICT facilities in accordance with the school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

If an incident occurs because a pupil has retaliated after persistent bullying, the school will consider this as being different from an unprovoked attack.

If an incident of bullying outside the school premises is reported to the school, it may be investigated and appropriate action taken, under the terms of the Behaviour Management Policy. If sanctions are considered appropriate, they apply regardless of whether the incident occurred within or outside school. However, the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises and/or when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should 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'. Where this is the case, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Lynne Kyle) or another member of the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Criminal Law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, 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 Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

This Policy was reviewed in July 2016.