

## **Bickley Park School**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

#### **Introduction**

At Bickley Park School we expect all members of the school community to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere, and to be protected when vulnerable, so that all may flourish without fear or unfair treatment or harassment.

Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting our school in maintaining high standards of behaviour, and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the target and the bullies. It affects the children who may witness violence and aggression and the distress of the target. It damages the atmosphere of the school. Less aggressive pupils may be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of a target by group pressures.

#### **1. Bullying**

The school's policy on bullying is unequivocal: it is always unacceptable.

Bullying is hurtful behaviour that usually occurs over a period of time. It is behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or to upset the target. It is behaviour that harasses, humiliates or intimidates others. It may take the form of teasing, verbal criticism and harassment on the grounds, for example, that someone has different coloured skin, the way they talk, their size or their name. Many experts say that bullying is associated with an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and target. 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), derived 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.

Bullying can cause lasting psychological damage to a target. All complaints should be taken seriously and pursued. Acting against bullying is a part of every teacher's duty of care to pupils.

Bullying can manifest itself in several forms:

**Physical** – hitting, kicking, “play-fighting” (which may not be “play” for one of those involved); and hiding, taking or damaging belongings.

**Verbal** – aggressive name calling, teasing, mockery, insults. It is important to consider the effects that the name calling has upon the target, rather than simply the actual words used which may seem to others to be harmless.

**Emotional** – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding someone from a group, activity or place, tormenting, spreading rumours, inciting others to do the same.

**Racist** – physical, verbal or emotional abuse against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity

**Religious / cultural** – physical, verbal or emotional abuse against a person or group because of religious belief or other cultural issues

**Sexual or sexist bullying** – making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching and using innuendo or inappropriate imagery

**Homophobic** – physical, verbal or emotional abuse against a person or group because of actual or perceived sexual orientation

**For reasons related to special educational needs or disability** – physical, verbal or emotional abuse against a person or group because of learning difficulties or other disability

**Cyber bullying** – the use of information and communications technology, particularly mobile phones, email, social websites, text messages, cameras and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyber bullying can take place outside of the normal school day and be directed towards the target while he or she is at home. Silent phone calls or abusive texts or emails can be just as distressing as being bullied face to face. Cyber bullying can have a profound effect on a child as the technology allows information (or misinformation) to be distributed widely, instantly and directly to the child's home or mobile device. The target can feel that there is nowhere available for him to escape from the bullying. The School will take action against any pupil responsible for using electronic devices to bully another pupil even if the bullying is taking place outside of the grounds of the school.

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. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see the appendix for a link to this document.

For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International link under 'further resources'.

## 2. Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, 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.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they will seek assistance from the police. 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.

### **3. Expectations of members of staff, pupils, parents and governors**

All those involved in the school have a responsibility to show that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable and to set an example which reflects that view.

All members of the School should help to create an atmosphere in which bullying will be spoken of openly, taken seriously and responded to with appropriate action. A pupil who is being bullied should tell his parents, and preferably his Form Tutor, another teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any pupil who suspects that bullying is taking place should report it to his Form Tutor or to another teacher.

Parents who are concerned that their child might be bullied, or who suspect that their child might be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Group Tutor immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Assistant Head (Personal Development). If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the schools complaints procedure.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school family.

Bickley Park School expects staff, pupils, parents and governors to:

- treat other people with respect and sensitivity;
- think carefully before speaking or acting in a way which may cause another person to be upset;
- respect differences and variety;
- be sensitive to the fact that what may seem fun to some (especially when in a group) may seem much more threatening to others (especially an individual)
- show kindness and consideration to those who appear unhappy or vulnerable;
- make a stand against those who ignore or go against these aims.

### **4. Involvement of pupils and staff training opportunities**

All new members of staff are given a copy of this policy on their first day at work. The School raises the awareness of staff to the issues described in this policy through regular training and discussion in staff meetings, and action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to occur.

During the school week opportunities are taken to educate our pupils about the nature and consequences of bullying and what each pupil can do as an individual to stop it from taking place, such as in PSHE and Form Tutor time, assemblies, drama, stories, literature, historical events and current affairs.

Positive values of mutual respect and consideration are promoted within the school in a wide range of contexts in assemblies, informal discussion in Form Tutor time, through reference to the 'Bickley Park Way'(See Appendix) and in PSHE lessons. At the start of each new academic year, Form Tutors remind

pupils of their responsibility to ensure that bullying is unacceptable and that everyone has a responsibility to report it if they witness it taking place.

Through PSHE, Computing and assemblies, pupils are made aware of the nature of cyber bullying. In Computing, all pupils in the school have lessons on online safety and material produced by CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre) and other providers is used. In PSHE, cyber bullying is covered in Year 5 and 6 as part of understanding tolerance and diversity and in Year 8 as a focussed unit of work.

## **5. Signs of bullying**

The following list is designed to raise awareness of signs to look out for. It is not an exhaustive list.

- Children who are suffering as targets of bullying may show changes in behaviour, such as shyness and nervousness, feign illness and / or be reluctant to come to school;
- They may show changes in their work or sleep patterns;
- They may lose their appetite;
- They may appear despondent, listless or unhappy;
- They may become easily upset or irritable;
- They may have physical signs such as scratches, bruises, missing or ripped clothing;
- They may complain that their belongings keep going missing;
- Other pupils are observed to be sniggering or nudging one another when the pupil enters the room or answers a question;
- The bullied person may spend a lot of time alone or find themselves left out of activities; it may get to the point where he is reluctant to take part in the first place.

## **6. How we work to prevent bullying**

### **The “Bystander Culture” versus “Upstander” or “Encouragement to Tell”**

As a school, we believe that it is unacceptable for any pupil to watch bullying taking place and to do nothing about it. We encourage all pupils to bring their concerns to the attention of a member of staff and/or their parents.

We create an atmosphere in which pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that the action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concerns. Pupils need to know that not reporting incidents of bullying has the effect of protecting the bullies, and gives them the message that they can continue to act in this way.

### **Promoting positive behaviour and identifying patterns**

The School aims to involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied.

Parents should feel confident that the School will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. The School also expects all parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

Further measures taken and aims of the School in relation to tackling bullying include:

- All pupils are given clear advice about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- The school community is encouraged to behave in the 'Bickley Park Way' and pupils are reminded through form time, assemblies and PSHE lessons of the values that lie at the heart of our school: Kindness, Integrity, Perseverance, Honesty and Respect.
- The School regularly evaluates and updates its approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance by updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers and regularly reviewing and updating this policy twice yearly.
- The School consistently implements disciplinary sanctions for bullying behaviour. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- We aim to provide effective and regular staff training in anti-bullying. We understand that policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support.
- We work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and/or where a criminal offence may have been committed, including working with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school.
- We aim to make it straightforward for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils are also encouraged through PSHE and assemblies to feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying. Every form room has the opportunity for boys to share concerns anonymously using a worry eater or worry box.
- We aim to sustain an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- Online, the School monitors and filters anything connected to the school. We cannot monitor personal devices connected to other networks, but through the ICT Acceptable Use Policy and our Computing programme pupils are educated as to good and safe use of digital technologies.

#### **7. Procedure if a child or parent reports alleged bullying to a member of staff:**

- a) The member of staff investigates by questioning the child in a sympathetic way. A written record of the incidents leading up to the report of bullying should be compiled by the member of staff, including what was asked and what was said. The written record should be completed during or immediately after the meeting has taken place with the alleged target of bullying.
- b) 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. Where this is the case, the member of staff will report his/her

concerns in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures to the DSL and/or the Head as appropriate. In such instances, the School will not investigate further before advice has been sought from children's social care services and/or the police.

- i) For all other cases in which bullying is suspected:
  - c) At the earliest possible opportunity, the member of staff should discuss the incident with the alleged target's Form Tutor and provide a copy of the notes for the Form Tutor.
  - d) The Form Tutor discusses the incident with the Assistant Head (Personal Development) and a decision is made as to whether the Form Tutor investigates further or whether the incident is sufficiently serious that the Assistant Head should investigate personally. If this is the case, the Head should be informed.
  - e) The investigation should be carried out in a sensitive and timely manner. Written records of all meetings with pupils should be kept, recorded on SIMS with the incident details.
  - f) Once the investigation is complete, a decision needs to be taken by the member of staff investigating as to whether bullying has taken place, or whether both parties were at fault or the incident was not as serious as initially described. The definition of bullying in the introduction to the policy should be used to make this judgement. If bullying is not judged to have taken place, then the Form Tutor should take charge of the incident and resolve it amicably with both parties.
- 2) If bullying is judged to have taken place, then:
- i) a record should be made by the Assistant Head on the bullying register which is held within SIMS. All copies of notes taken should be placed on the electronic files of the boys involved. This essential record keeping is necessary so that patterns of bullying can be identified. The Head will be informed and consulted on possible further action.
  - ii) If appropriate, the perpetrator and the target should be encouraged to meet in the presence of the Assistant Head. A no-blame approach will be taken to allow the target the opportunity to tell the bully how he has been made to feel as a result of the bully's actions, and give the bully the opportunity to apologise in person. (Details of the no-blame approach process can be found in Appendix 2.) Both should be told that, now the incident has been resolved, there must not be a repeat of the bullying behaviour: if there is, the target must report it and the bully will be dealt with extremely severely (see section 8 below).
  - iii) Disciplinary sanctions should be considered in line with the School's Behaviour Management Policy to discourage any further bullying behaviour. The Assistant Head will liaise with the Head on this matter. For very serious cases of bullying, see section 8 below.
  - iv) The parents of both/all parties should be kept informed of what is happening and told of any action taken.

- v) The respective Form Tutors should follow the situation up with both parties after a few days and later (probably a couple of weeks) to monitor progress. The Assistant Head (Personal Development) should be kept informed.
- 3) For particularly serious cases of bullying, or where a boy continues to bully the target after a previous incident has been addressed:
- i) the Assistant Head will brief the Head.
  - ii) Serious disciplinary sanctions will be employed in accordance with the behaviour management policy; if necessary, the Head will permanently exclude the individual from the School.
  - iii) Further consideration should be given as to whether there is an issue relating to child protection in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. If in doubt, advice should be sought from children's services (Bromley MASH team).

## 8. Guidelines for interviewing

The member of staff will choose a place which is quiet with no interruptions. The interview should be non-confrontational. The main theme is that there is a problem to be solved.

There should be a mutual agreement that the pupil being bullied is unhappy and everyone should try to improve the situation.

It is not possible to promise that everything the child says can be kept confidential – any action taken will necessarily involve others. However, any boy who is prepared to tell a teacher that he feels he is being bullied must be offered support and protection.

The target of bullying must understand that revenge is never the correct response, and that to confront the alleged bully constructively is more likely to achieve change. It should be recognised that the alleged perpetrator may himself be or have been a target of bullying or even be suffering significant harm (see the School policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection). Further investigation and/or support may be necessary to help this individual.

**Careful notes should be taken (see procedure above). All documentation should be recorded on the SIMS files of all the children involved and the Assistant Head notified that this has been done.**

### Links with other policy documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies:

- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

<b>Author</b>	SM/JP	
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<b>Date Approved</b>	September 2018	Headmaster:
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### **Appendix 1: Further Resources**

Further information is available online by following the links below:

- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) (DFE, October 2014)
- [Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools](#) (DFE, March 2014)
- [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DFE, November 2014)
- [Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#) (DFE, November 2014)

## **Appendix 2: The "No Blame" Approach to Bullying**

"The No Blame Approach to Bullying" developed by George Robinson and Barbara Maines. It is a simple 7 step process that has the following four essential ingredients:

- The absence of blame
- The encouragement of empathy
- Shared Responsibility
- Problem Solving

### Step 1 - Talk with the target

A facilitator trained in the approach talks to the target to establish the impact that the bullying has had on them. It is not designed to gather "facts" about who said or did what to who. The target will be encouraged to suggest the names of people to form a group who should help solve the problem. These will include those involved, colluders and perhaps friends of the target. The target is also asked to produce a piece of writing or a picture to express how the bullying is affecting them.

### Step 2 - convene a meeting of the group

The facilitator gathers the group together ensuring that there is a balance between helpful and reliable students and those whose behaviour has been causing a problem.

### Step 3 - explain the problem

The facilitator explains that there is a problem and that "Ian" is experiencing certain difficulties. Without discussing specific incidents or accusations the facilitator explains how "Ian" is feeling using the piece of writing from the target to illustrate this.

### Step 4 - share responsibility

The facilitator points out that no one is going to be punished and that the group has been convened to help solve the problem because there is a shared responsibility for "Ian's" happiness.

### Step 5 - Ask for ideas

The facilitator asks the group to suggest ways that they may be able to alleviate the suffering felt by the target. Members of the group are encouraged to use "I" language (I will sit next to him in lessons, I will walk to school with him etc) so that they take ownership of the solutions. These ideas are not imposed on the group by the facilitator.

### Step 6 - leave it up to them

The facilitator ends the meeting by passing responsibility for the problem over to the group, thanks them for their support and arranges a meeting to see how things are going.

### Step 7 - meet them again

The facilitator meets each of the group individually a week later to see how things are going.

### **Appendix 3: The Bickley Park Way**

#### The Bickley Park Way

*We believe that we should...*

**Share**

**Be honest**

**Be kind and helpful**

**Treat others as we would be treated**

**Listen to one another** and try to understand other people's points of view.

**Forgive** - recognise that everyone, including ourselves, makes mistakes.

**Respect others**, recognising that they are important too.

**Be resilient**, learning from things that go wrong and aiming for better next time.

**Work hard to do your best to be your *best self***