

University of Birmingham School Preventing Bullying Policy

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The school has a 'duty of care' towards its students with regard to bullying in that the Principal and staff stand in loco parentis (in place of the parents). This duty of care includes protecting students from harm of bullying.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The 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.
- 1.3 Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. Under the Children Act of 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern where there is, "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm".
- 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 parents knowing that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- 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.



2. Definition of Bullying

- 2.1 Bullying can be defined in a number of ways. We define bullying as the repeated use of any behaviour (this may involve stealing or destroying his/her property) intended to hurt another person, resulting in pain and distress to the victim.
- 2.2 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 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) **Homophobic and transphobic bullying** is a specific form of bullying and occurs when bullying is motivated by prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people (LGB), or against those perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. It can also be targeted towards students who are seen to be “different” in some other way, for example, because they may be considered shy by other students. 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. Homophobic bullying increasingly takes place through phone calls, text messaging, picture/video messaging, e-mail, online message boards, online chat rooms and on personal web spaces. Through modern technology vicious comments can be made and rumours spread about a person’s sexual orientation.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The 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.
- 2.5 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 Personal Learning and Development Programme taught by Form Tutors.
- 2.6 Bullying can take place between students, between students and staff; or between staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods.



- 2.7 It can happen in isolation or quite often in the presence of others.
- 2.8 Bullying may start from an individual or from a gang.
- 2.9 Girls and boys are equally involved in bullying or being bullied
- 2.10 Bullying occurs more frequently when there is less teacher supervision, before or after school, during break and lunch-hour, in toilets or PE changing rooms.
- 2.11 Students being bullied tend to be isolated, anxious, feel inadequate, and are unable to make and maintain friendships and have a low self-image.
- 2.12 Most bullying is hidden from teachers; they may be the last to learn about incidents of bullying taking place in their own environment.
- 2.13 Bullying may occur from older to younger students, or within a year group. Bear in mind it may occur from adults to children, or even children to adults.
- 2.14 A bully has a wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else

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 - the University of Birmingham School believes that:

- a) bullying is undesirable and unacceptable;
- b) bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found;
- 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 all parents and students have received, had access and the opportunity to comment upon the School's 'Preventing Bullying Policy'.
- 6.2 That there are effective listening systems for students and staff within the School
- 6.3 That parents have a point of contact for the in school if they are concerned about their child.
- 6.4 That all staff have the necessary skills and confidence to deal with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly
- 6.5 That no child or young persons educational opportunities and achievement is disadvantaged due to the experience of bullying
- 6.6 That all staff are equipped with the skills necessary to deal with bullying
- 6.7 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
- 6.8 That there is effective communication with parents and the wider School community on the subject of bullying through newsletters and parents' meetings.
- 6.9 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 raise awareness of the impacts of bullying in the School;
- b) To raise awareness of the support systems in place for bullied students in the School, and;
- c) To raise awareness of the consequences for bullies in the School.
- d) To log, investigate and act upon all incidents classified as bullying;



8 Procedures and Dealing with Incidents

9.1 Role of students and staff in reporting and recording a bullying incident involving 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 the University of Birmingham School all staff will follow the School guide to reporting and dealing with bullying incidents.

9.2 Guidance for 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;
 - Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and, if possible, tell them to stop and tell them how you feel.
- 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 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) If your child has been bullied:
 - Calmly talk with your child about his/ her 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 he/she should report them to an adult in School **immediately**;
 - Speak to your child's Form Tutor in the first instance.
 - Explain to the Form Tutor 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;
 - Discuss your concerns with the parent governor or other parents;
 - Make an appointment to discuss the matter with your child's Head of Year or the Senior Vice-Principal and keep a record of the meeting;
 - If this does not help write to the Principal explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happening, and;
 - If you require any further support then please contact the Chair of the Governors' Pastoral Liaison Committee.
- d) If your child is displaying bullying behaviour towards others:
- Talk with your child and explain that what he/she is 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 he/ she can join in with other children without bullying;
 - Contact your child's Form Tutor and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop him/ her bullying others;
 - Regularly check with your child how things are going at School, and;
 - Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/ she is 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 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 exclusion;
- g) withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum, and;
- h) fixed-term exclusion.

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.

9.12 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.”

- 9.13 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.

9 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) Co-operative group work;
 - b) Peer mediation;
 - c) Peer counselling;
 - d) Buddy systems;
 - e) Personal Learning and Development Programme (Character Education, PSHCE, SMSC and CEIAG);
 - f) Preventing Bullying Week, and;
 - g) Training for all members of staff on the Preventing Bullying Policy and Procedures.

10 Confidentiality

- 11.1 School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students.
- 11.2 Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.
- 11.3 It is very rare for a 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 student’s age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.
- 11.6 Where it is clear that a 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, students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent or carer.
- 11.9 An underlying principle in supporting 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.



11 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 The Senior Leadership Team and Governors' Pastoral Liaison Committee will, on an annual basis, analyse the School's bullying data, identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of 'Preventing Bullying' strategy.

12 Evaluation

- 13.1 This policy 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.