



**Biggleswade**Academy

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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### 1. **Bullying is defined as:**

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the victim to defend themselves. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological and it can happen face-to-face or online.

**Bullying behaviour can be:**

- Physical - pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling
- Emotional - isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation or coercion
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films
- Online /cyber - posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - can include the exploitation of individuals

It is important that we recognise the difference between bullying and simply “falling out”. Many isolated one-off incidents do not fall into the category of bullying.

**2. Aims of this policy:**

- To ensure that staff and pupils know what is meant by bullying
- To attempt to prevent bullying happening in our school
- To identify procedures that deal swiftly and effectively with bullying incidents
- To increase the awareness of parents to the early signs of bullying

**Our anti-bullying policy is based on the following set of principles:**

- Pupils will be taught that bullying is unacceptable inside or outside school
- Cases of bullying will be seen as a breach of the school's Behaviour Policy
- Staff will take bullying seriously and investigate incidents thoroughly
- Pupils will be encouraged to tell and teachers to listen
- Staff will make every effort to supervise children carefully
- Staff will be consistent in the way we deal with bullying
- Pupils, parents and staff are informed of the school's approach to bullying and the school's anti-bullying policy reviewed annually reaffirming our commitment to its principles.
- The policy will be displayed on the Academy website

Where bullying does exist the victim must feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems within the school to end the bullying. It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help build and maintain an anti-bullying ethos within the school. This document outlines how we make this possible at Biggleswade Academy. It should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy.

**3. Cyber Bullying**

With the growth of social networking sites, emails and texting this type of bullying has become more common in recent years. Incidents of cyberbullying are treated like any other type of bullying and are dealt with through the Behaviour Policy. However, in addition the following procedures have been set up to deal specifically with cyber bullying:

- All pupils and Parents/Carers must adhere to the school's acceptable use policy and e-safety rules

- Breaches of this may result in a pupil's VLE or school email account being suspended and access to the school's ICT network being denied
- A strict filter is applied to all school ICT equipment to block inappropriate material
- The school is also able to offer parents advice on how to monitor use of ICT out of school

#### **4. How will we deal with bullying at Biggleswade Academy?**

##### **Actions to Tackle Bullying: We Will**

- Use the curriculum, assemblies and form time to educate children and to create a non-bullying culture
- Ensure staff are vigilant and constantly look for signs of bullying
- Ensure staff take reports of bullying seriously
- Continue to make good use of our pupil 'Big Buddies' (see below) and 'Youth Support Worker' to combat bullying
- Continue to use our 'Restorative Practice' as one of a range of specific strategies designed to combat bullying
- Continue to commit to partnership working and therefore highly values regular liaison and communication with parents to prevent and combat the effects of bullying
- Continue to promote the Academy Virtues via 'Thought for the Week' and 'Virtue of the Month'

In addition, the Academy has a variety of general strategies and sanctions, set out in the Behaviour Policy, which are also designed to be effective in preventing and combating bullying.

##### **Big Buddies**

Some pupils in the school have been trained to be anti-bullying Big Buddies. The pupils are trained in methods of conflict resolution and mediation and are on duty every day. Their role is to assist children at break time if and when the need arises. The type of need may come from children having no one to play with, children who have fallen out with other friends or disputes over equipment. Big Buddies are easily visible to other pupils, wearing a distinctive red top with a yellow smiley face design.

##### **Restorative Practice**

Restorative practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all of the parties involved.

##### **The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:**

- Reports of bullying will be dealt with and investigated initially by the form/class teacher
- The form/class teacher (or Progress Leader if the form/class teacher is absent) will interview all pupils involved and will record the incident. They will also inform parents, carers and relevant teachers in order that the situation can be effectively monitored
- In serious cases parents may be asked to come into school for a meeting to discuss the situation
- All proven incidences of bullying will be reported to the Academy Principal in order to ensure effective monitoring and to facilitate coordinated action
- Pupils who are found to have been the victim of bullying will be supported as detailed below
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate to the particular circumstances in accordance with the Behaviour Policy
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- The school may also choose to consult the police as appropriate

##### **Pupils who have been bullied are supported by:**

- Being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their form/class teacher or another member of staff with whom they feel comfortable
- Reassurance that we are listening, it will be investigated and we will help resolve the situation
- Offer of continuous support
- Actions to assist in restoring self-esteem and confidence
- The use of restorative practice meetings
- Being given assurances that the school will continue to monitor the situation
- It may also be appropriate to encourage the victim to develop a wider circle of friends, activities and interests

#### **5. Parental Involvement:**

- The parents/carers of bullies and targets will be informed of incidents as appropriate
- Parents should always initially contact their child's Form/Class Teacher (or Progress Leader if unavailable) if they are concerned about their child being unsettled at school or if they suspect that they may be involved in bullying
- Parents should encourage their children to tell someone if they are ever being bullied or are aware that bullying is taking place
- Parents/carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to achieve good relationships between pupils by supporting the strategies used in school

#### **6. Signs and Symptoms of bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## **7. Appendix A: Pupil Strategies for Dealing with Bullying**

- Inform an adult at the school as soon as possible.
- Speak to your parents, carer or a responsible adult that you trust. You need their help and support.
- Laugh at or ignore comments or teasing wherever possible. These people want your scared reaction and humour or silence might throw them off. You may have to keep it up for a while and then they are likely to get bored.
- You can tell them to buzz off, say no or go away. But you must say it clearly and walk away immediately. Practice in the mirror.
- If it is a group bothering you, look the weakest one of the group in the eye and say “This isn’t funny” and then walk away.
- You can sign up for self-defence courses which will give you more confidence. These lessons don’t mean you ‘fight back’, they can help your confidence.
- Stay with a crowd: – bullies usually pick on kids alone.
- Ask one of the gang members when they are alone why they find it necessary to gang up on one person. This will only work if you have some sort of relationship with that person.
- Do not stop if they confront you. Keep on walking. Get someone to witness what they are doing so that a teacher intervenes.
- Stop thinking like a victim – you do not deserve this. Walk tall; pretend you are confident, even if you are not. Look at the bullies and smile as if they are not frightening you, even if you do not feel that way inside. Keep walking away and ignoring them, if nothing else. They will get bored eventually.
- Keep a diary of all the events –time and place and what is said. Have your parents contact the school and tell them what is happening. It is not right that bullying is allowed to go on, nor is it right that the bullies should be allowed to get away with such behaviour.

***Don’t Suffer in Silence: Tell Someone!***

## **8. Appendix B: How Parents Can Help**

- If you are worried that your child is being bullied, ask him/her directly.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying.
- Take bullying seriously and find out the facts when told of an incident of bullying.
- Don’t agree to keep the bullying a secret.
- Talk with your child’s Form/Class Teacher or Progress Leader if it is happening at school.
- Help children practice strategies such as saying “No”, walking with confidence and running away.
- Give your child a chance to vent their feelings about being bullied.
- Arrange to meet your child, if the bullying is happening on the way to or from school or some other activity.
- If you feel it would help your child’s confidence, ask them if they would like to take self-defence classes.
- Keep a written diary of all incidents.
- Invite children over to help your child to make friends.