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Review period: biannually

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School



Anti- Bullying Policy

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Updated : May 2021 – PWR

Review: every other year, or in line with major policy change

1) Introduction

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School (BRGS) is committed to providing a caring, safe and friendly environment so that students may learn in a welcoming, relaxed and secure atmosphere. Every member of our school has the right to dignity, respect and equal worth. Bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable in our school and is treated very seriously. If bullying does occur, all our students must be able to **tell** appropriate persons and know that their complaint will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We guarantee to pursue any complaints or allegations suggesting that an individual is not being treated with due respect. BRGS is a '**telling**' school and any member of our school community who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report it.

This policy links with the following:

- Single Equality Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (Internet safety)
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Allegations of bullying of students by staff are dealt with under the school's Safeguarding procedures

2) Definition

Bullying is an imbalance of power which causes behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It is inappropriate, unacceptable and unjustifiable behaviour that causes other people distress to the extent they are forced to change their normal routine or leaves the person being bullied feeling defenceless and is detrimental to their well being.

Bullying can be Verbal, Indirect or Physical (VIP), further defined as:

- emotional: being unfriendly to someone, excluding or tormenting a person (e.g. hiding their belongings, threats, rude gestures)
- physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting, or any other use of violence
- verbal: saying things about someone, name calling, spreading rumours
- electronic : via e-mail/text message/social media

Although bullying often takes place in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others and all school members should challenge or report behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

3) Why Bullying is Not Acceptable

Bullying can have a devastating effect on people. Persistent bullying and put-downs can ruin people's lives. Every person in our school deserves to be respected for who they are. Students or adults who display bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving towards others.

Although the “Every Child Matters” agenda is old, it’s statements are still relevant - that every child in our country has the right to receive the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

Children who are bullied are less likely to achieve these outcomes. Bullying can seriously affect learning and cause people to live in fear.

4) Policy Objectives

The aims of this policy are such that:

- All members of our community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, students and parents have an understanding of what bullying is. They should know what the school policy on bullying is and follow it when bullying occurs.
- At BRGS our students and staff have a duty of care toward each other. Any allegation of bullying **will** be taken seriously.
- Bullying behaviour will be monitored by every member of staff in school, and by the student body. Incidents will be thoroughly investigated, recorded, and any appropriate action taken.
- Staff must be aware of tell-tale signs or symptoms or any alteration in behaviour and consider bullying as a possible cause. See Appendix A for examples.

5) Awareness Raising

- Bullying issues are raised explicitly and implicitly through school and year assemblies and through the formal curriculum (e.g. PSHCE & English) and the informal curriculum (e.g. through sport). Talking about issues such as bullying is a part of the school culture. Students must be aware that talking about - and reporting - such issues is the norm.
- The signing of a behaviour contract on entrance into BRGS by both students and parents ensures that adherence to school policies and procedures are agreed.
- School rules state clearly what behaviour is expected of all of our students when they are in or around school.
- Re-education of the students displaying the bullying behaviour is important.

6) Reporting Procedures

Our effectiveness in dealing with bullying depends on us knowing when it occurs. This can happen through observation. However, most bullying tends to be hidden. Therefore, it essential we are told when bullying occurs. Speaking up is vital, even though this may be difficult at times. This message is communicated and emphasised starting with our visits to meet new students at their primary schools through our ASK and **TELL** motto. School will regularly remind students of the importance of speaking up.

6.1) Reporting Incidents

- All school members should be aware of types of bullying behaviour such as: taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, gossiping, inappropriate texts and emails including offensive images, rumour spreading and exclusion of people from groups. If we are all aware of this type of behaviour then we can challenge it.

- All types of bullying behaviour must be challenged by all adults in school. Low level incidents must be immediately responded to. This conveys the message that bullying is not to be tolerated and can prevent escalation.
- Stereotypical comments, homophobic, racist and sexist language, derogatory terms or any comments that could be deemed offensive must be challenged.

6.2) Students

- Students are encouraged to **tell** an adult in school when bullying occurs. This could be a class teacher, their form teacher or head of year. Students can also approach the school nurse, pastoral manager, their form prefects, the welfare staff, or any other member of the school staff.
- Students can report incidents to parents who should then contact school (form tutor/head of year/pastoral manager/assistant head - pastoral) who will investigate.
- Students can use the Time2Talk email facility that school offers - this is strictly confidential unless there are child protection issues to follow. This facility allows students to email school with their concerns without having to waive their anonymity. Students using this facility will be encouraged to report incidents but will also be able to access advice and support. The address is Time2Talk@brgs.org.uk
- Where students report an incident of bullying, their identity will be kept confidential.
- Teaching staff will contact the appropriate head of year if they observe bullying behaviour.

7) Actions

Our anti-bullying methodology is loosely based on the Pikas approach, which seeks to re-educate the bully whilst protecting the victim. At all points we will seek to gather documentary evidence which will be cross-referenced to enable a complete picture to be built.

- The person reporting the incident will be interviewed first (this may be the victim). They will be treated sensitively and reassured about confidentiality. We are a large enough school for us to be able to say "Someone has noticed...." without anyone working out who it is. A written account of any incidents will be completed, ensuring the names of witnesses, times and places are included. The victim will be asked how they feel about the incident and kept informed of what will happen.
- The witnesses will be seen separately, again completing written statements. They will receive assurances that their identities will be secure.
- The perpetrator will be seen. If there is more than one, they will be interviewed separately where possible to avoid collusion. The identity of the person who reported the incident(s) will not be revealed. Written statements will be taken.
- All statements will be reviewed together to gain an overview of the situation. There are times when there is not sufficient clarity to pursue the situation. In these cases those involved will be carefully observed over the next few weeks to identify any potential issues.
- Where there is clarity, and depending on the nature of the incident, a warning will be issued to the perpetrator. We would seek to enable a reconciliation (both parties will need help with this). Both parties will be informed of a check up 24 hours after the incident, then three days later, then a week later – by this point new behaviour should be becoming embedded within the perpetrator. This careful monitoring (formal and informal) will be by all who come into contact with the class (informed by the relevant head of year). The overview will always be undertaken by the same person to ensure continuity, and would normally be the relevant head of year.

- Full notes will be made of the incident and of interviews with the victim, perpetrator and witnesses, which will then be kept in the relevant students' files, to be accessed only by the head of year and SLT.
- If there is a re-occurrence, and re-education has not worked, sanctions will follow and parents informed. The following steps may be taken:
 - official warnings to cease offending by senior members of staff
 - detention
 - exclusion from certain areas of school premises
 - minor fixed-term exclusion
 - major fixed-term exclusion
 - permanent exclusion.
- Behaviour of a racist or homophobic nature will also be reported to the deputy head-teacher (pastoral), who will ensure the Local Authority is informed.

Any child subject to homophobic bullying (irrespective of their sexual orientation) may find disclosure of this kind to an adult very difficult and staff will seek to respond promptly to any inappropriate language, behaviour or victimisation; name calling will be dealt with immediately; sensitivity should be considered; and referral to the relevant head of year made immediately.

8) Support

In supporting a victim of bullying strategies for building self esteem and confidence may be beneficial. Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice
- reassuring the student
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- the expertise of our school counsellors or pastoral manager.

Liaison with parents - to be undertaken by the head of year

When the perpetrator is a member of another school, that school is given all the details of the occurrence, and information fed back to the victim and parent.

9) Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. 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.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Messages and images, which can be misinterpreted, can easily be propagated throughout the whole school community.

Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

School will seek to apply the procedures detailed above to gather information about cyberbullying. This can be a difficult task as images or messages can be deleted easily. We would encourage students who are being bullied to keep a copy of the offending items and **tell** an adult as soon as possible.

Where matters become extreme, and because cyberbullying will take place outside the school community, parents may be advised to inform the police.

10) Parameters of School's Responsibilities

School will intervene to resolve complaints about bullying behaviour taking place while at school and on school journeys.

Complaints made about the behaviour of students from this school taking place outside the times indicated above (e.g. evenings, weekends, school holidays) are passed on to parents. While this would form part of a bigger picture, it is outside school's jurisdiction to intervene but parents are asked to work with school to resolve the issue.

The law empowers members of school to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour which is in accordance with the school behaviour for learning and disciplinary policies. Headteachers, to such an extent as is reasonable, are empowered to regulate the behaviour of students when they are off the school site. This is particularly pertinent to regulating cyber bullying.

11) Complaints Procedure

School has a complaints procedure that should be followed if any party feels unhappy about the practice and procedures put in place. Information can be obtained from the clerk to the governors, via the school.

12) Resources

Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it.
<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

The Diana Award: Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying.
<http://diana-award.org.uk/>

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.
<http://www.childnet.com/>

ThinkUKnow: resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia: provides a national freephone Actionline for targets of homophobic or transphobic bullying.

<http://www.each.education/>

MENCAP: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/>

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375420/Advice_for_Parents_on_Cyberbullying_131114.pdf

Appendix A

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or in their behaviour that they are being bullied. All adults must be aware of the following signs and symptoms and investigate if a child is:

- frightened of walking to/from school
- not wanting to go on the school/public bus and begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- becomes phobic of school or is unwilling to go or even truants
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries **themselves** to sleep or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to underachieve in school work
- comes home with things broken/damaged or lost
- asks for money or starts stealing money or is continually 'losing' money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money or lunch has been lost)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- bullies others
- stops eating or begins to harm **themselves** in some other way
- is frightened to explain what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid of using their mobile phone or the internet
- seems nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received

Other symptoms may include poor punctuality, headaches, and stomach pains.

This list is not exhaustive, nor may all or any of these signs occur. Any of these can indicate the possibility of other issues. However, bullying should be considered as a possible cause and should be investigated.