



The
Birkenhead Park
School

Anti-Bullying Policy

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Birkenhead Park School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at The Birkenhead Park School. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to ask for help and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. ANYONE who knows or suspects that bullying is happening is expected to report it. The Birkenhead Park School aims to develop mutually caring relationships between all members of the school community.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

The DfE states that bullying is “repeated behaviour that is intended to hurt someone physically or emotionally.”

While there is no single definition of bullying, the DfE identifies three characteristics that are included in most definitions:

- The behaviour is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated
- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s)

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, use of threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** - bullying comments regarding sexual orientation
- **Sexist** – discrimination on the basis of gender because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- **Transphobic** – any transgender bullying
- **Verbal** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber** – all areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, e.g. camera and video facilities
- **Religious Beliefs** – because of, or focussing on the issue of religion and belief

The school aims to:

- Eliminate bullying in this school
- Create a safe environment for all students and staff

The school will work towards these aims in partnership with parents. The aim of the Anti-Bullying Policy is to clarify the system of dealing with a bullying incident and outline the content and manner in which anti-bullying education will be delivered.

Other school policies have relevance to the Anti-Bullying Policy such as the Safeguarding Policy, particularly with reference to peer-on-peer abuse.

Anti-bullying Procedures

All students are encouraged to feel it is right to tell someone if they are being bullied or if someone they know is being bullied. Incidents of bullying will be referred to the pastoral team and be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

All staff receive training to recognise the signs and symptoms of bullying, and are expected to be vigilant and proactive in order to support students. Whilst it is the responsibility of all staff within the school to reinforce the anti-bullying strategy and support the victims of bullying, it is recognised that not all staff have the capacity to carry out a swift and thorough investigation. Therefore incidents of bullying should be referred to the appropriate year team as quickly as possible. Year Leaders have training, experience and the capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to incidents as they occur.

Staff suspecting an incident of bullying should:

- Reassure the young person that their concerns are being taken seriously and will be investigated.
- Contact the relevant Year Leader as soon as possible with details of the incident.

Year Leaders will investigate all reported incidents of bullying using the following procedure:

- The victim and perpetrator will be initially interviewed separately by the Year Leader and an assessment will be made in conjunction with the victim as to the appropriate level and course of response.
- If this discussion confirms a bullying incident has taken place, an investigation will be conducted and the Year Leader will take statements from students outlining details of the event, gather evidence and clearly outline the initial response. The response will include support for the victim, details of contact with parents, and support and sanctions for the perpetrator.
- Record the incident details on the school's bullying log.
- The victim and perpetrator will be monitored by the Pastoral team and a follow up meeting will take place as arranged (timing appropriate to individual situations).
- Appropriate staff (including external agencies) will be kept informed of the individual student needs and support mechanisms. Students have been encouraged to self-refer to their pastoral team, the safeguarding team or any staff in Student Services at any time.

Route of Referral

NB: It is recognised that in some cases a student may have a particularly good relationship with a member of staff other than those mentioned above and these staff may be more appropriate to work with them at the discretion of the Pastoral Leader, if that member of staff feels suitably trained and has the capacity to do so.

Anti-bullying Education Programme

The anti-bullying education programme will:

- provide information that is relevant and appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the students develop skills around the school values of positivity, ambition, resilience, and thoughtfulness
- encourage the exploration and clarification of values and attitudes, rights and responsibilities foster self-esteem, positive self-image and confidence

Delivery will be through:

- topics within the SMSC programme, including the PSHE and RE curriculum, form-time and assemblies
- targeted pastoral interventions and mentoring by the pastoral team
- alongside outside agencies such as kooth.com, Brook and Action for Children

Parents' Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of parents to:

- Monitor changes in their child's behaviour that may indicate s/he is being bullied;
- Inform the school of any suspected bullying even if it does not concern their child;
- Co-operate with the school and work together to prevent any repercussions of this type of behaviour and long term damage to the victim;
- Be sympathetic and supportive towards their child;
- Work in cooperation with the school and accept the sanctions and support given if their child has been accused of bullying others;
- Always check their child's use of social media;
- Refrain from involving themselves with other parties.

Outline of Monitoring Procedures

Records will be kept of all reported bullying incidents reported to the Senior Leadership Team / Governors who will provide support to students and liaise with parents. Any patterns identified will be discussed and appropriate strategies identified.

Incidents outside the School

The procedures laid out in this policy equally apply to any incidents outside school premises. Incidents outside the school may be communicated to the Police.

Dissemination of the Policy

This policy is universally accessible on the school website, including to students, parents, staff members and Governors.